

Deism Self-refuted;

OR AN

EXAMINATION

OF THE

Principles of Infidelity

SCATTERED THROUGHOUT

The different Works of Monf. ROUSSEAU ;

In Form of LETTERS.

By Monsieur BERGIER, D. D.

An Associate of the Academy of Sciences, Belles
Lettres, and Arts of Besançon, and a Corres-
pondent of the Royal Academy of Inscriptions
and Belles Lettres.

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Deities self-related;

OR

EXAMINATION

OF THE

Principles of Indivision

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

The different Ways of the Kingdom;

In 1800 of 1801

By MESSRS. HENRY D. D.

An Account of the Academy of Sciences, and
the various Arts of the Kingdom, and the
progress of the Royal Academy of Sciences,
and the various Arts of the Kingdom.

The following

The following is a list of the various
revised and corrected by the Academy.



Printed in the Year 1800



DEISM SELF-REFUTED.

LETTER VII.

On the Creation, and Fall of Man.

YOU have attacked, Sir, two particular Dogmas taught us by Revelation, viz. the *Creation*, and the *Fall of Man*: it is proper to see, if you have any good grounds to go on in this attack. You content yourself at first with saying: *Whether or no God created Matter, Body, Spirits, the World, I know not. The idea of Creation confounds me, and is beyond the reach of my understanding: I believe it as far as I can conceive it**. This is as much as to say: that as you do not conceive it, neither do you believe it. But you did not stop there; you

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* Emil. T. iii. p. 86.

afterwards endeavoured to give the reasons of your incredulity : these we must now examine.

If the eternal and necessary existence of Matter hath its difficulties with respect to us ; its Creation hath those that are not less of all the ideas, which are not evidently contradictory, that of Creation is the least comprehensible to the human mind.*

I acknowledge, without the least hesitation, that *Creation* is not an idea, which naturally presents itself to the human understanding, as none of the ancient Philosophers ever suspected it, and all of them denied it. The power of creating is one of the Attributes of the Divinity, or rather one of the Properties of his Power. As you own that this infinite power is very imperfectly known to us, it is not surprising that we are too short-sighted to perceive therein the power of creating. It is therefore highly probable, that if God had not revealed the *Creation* of the world to us, the most profound Metaphysicians would never have thought of it.

But I will not own, that *Creation* includes as great difficulties, as the *Eternal and Necessary Existence of Matter*. This evidently implies a contradiction, and you agree that the idea of *Creation*, is not “ evidently contradictory.”

You know Metaphysicians demonstrate, that an *Eternal and Necessary Existence* is evidently the Plenitude of Being ; that the Plenitude of Being is sovereign Perfection : that consequently it is impossible, that what eternally and necessarily exists, should



* Let. p. 48, 49.

should not include in itself every perfection. I am of your opinion, that *Clarke*, of all others, hath placed this truth in the clearest light. Nor is it less evident, that Matter doth not include in its essence every perfection; that it cannot even include thought, notwithstanding what some Reasoners pretend to the contrary, whom you have very well refuted. It is therefore evident, that Matter cannot have an *Eternal and Necessary Existence*.

Much less will it be granted you, that *the Co-existence of two Principles, God and Matter, seem to explain better the constitution of the Universe, than Creation* doth*. If matter exists eternally and necessarily, it is independent; if independent, it is not subject to the power of God. It is impossible to conceive how God could range Matter in such an order, as to form the world, if Matter was independent of him. Consequently it is not more easy to comprehend how the Universe was formed of an eternal Matter, than how it was created by an infinite Power.

Observe, Sir, I desire you, that all the ancient Fathers made use of this argument, to prove against the Philosophers, the Creation of Matter.

If Matter exists eternally and necessarily, it is immutable; its arrangement makes a part of its essence, and is as unchangeable as itself; since it hath this arrangement from itself, it hath it necessarily. Therefore, in this hypothesis, God could give Matter no new form.

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Lastly,

* Let. p. 50.

Lastly, what you add, is not a jot more true: viz. that *this Co-existence of two Principles seems to remove the difficulties, which it would be hard to get over without it, among others, that of the Origin of Evil**. All the difficulty in explaining the origin of evil, consists in being able to reconcile it with the infinite Goodness of the Creator. Now the Partizans of *Manicheism* would prove to you, that the eternal existence of Matter doth not remove this difficulty. A God infinitely good, would they say, knowing the evils which must necessarily arise from the imperfections of Matter, rather ought to have refrained from creating the world, than to have suffered so many defects therein; and from producing creatures, whom he could not hinder from being unhappy.

The hypothesis therefore of two principles can afford no comfort to human reason; it only substitutes absurdities in the room of a Dogma that is incomprehensible. It is less inconvenient to admit of the Creation, than of the Eternity of Matter.

But you are not very sure, that God hath in reality revealed Creation, *Although it be clearly expressed in our translations of Genesis*. We must know likewise whether it be so in the original. *It would be necessary to understand the Hebrew perfectly well, and even to have been a contemporary with Moses, to know for certain, what sense he gave to the word, which we translate, Created.*

All this may be very necessary in the Protestant system,

* Let. p. 51.

system, which you profess to follow, and which you betray at this very instant ; but I will shew you by and by, that it is not so in the Catholic belief.

*This term, continue you, is too Philosophical to have had, in its origin, the common and popular acceptance, which we give it at present, on the faith of our Teachers. The acceptance of it may have changed, and deceived even the Septuagint, who were already tinctured with the questions of the Greek Philosophy. Nothing is more common than for words to change their meaning in process of time, and be the occasion of attributing to the authors who had made use of them, ideas which they never had. It is very much to be doubted, if the Greek word had the meaning which we are pleased to give it, &c **

Here, Sir, your memory hath proved treacherous. It is really a pity, that in the only passage, where you attempt to display any critical erudition, it should be found faulty. You forget, that the Greek word made use of by the *Septuagint*, doth not answer to the word *Created*, but that they simply translated : *in the beginning God made heaven and earth.*

Perhaps you will answer : So much the better, I have then the *Septuagint* on my side. Sir, the authority of the *Septuagint*, taken alone, is very light : the certitude of our Faith doth not depend on the ability of Interpreters.

Without pretending to be perfectly master of the Hebrew, I will grant you, very readily,

* Let. p. 51.

ly, that the word made use of by *Moses*, doth not necessarily signify *Creation* properly so called; that it is sometimes used in the scripture for the Verb *to make*, as the *Septuagint* have translated it here. I even go farther, at the risk of being blamed for it; I am persuaded that no language, not excepting even the *Hebrew*, ever had a term proper and solely consecrated to express *Creation*; the reason is plain. As it is an idea, that doth not naturally occur to the mind of man, especially of such as are not Philosophers, it follows that no people ever thought of expressing it in their language: and when *Moses* undertook to write, he could make use of no other terms, but of such as were used in his own tongue.

Notwithstanding all these concessions, I still maintain, that *Creation* is revealed in the first verse of *Genesis*, because the Church understands it so now, and always hath understood it so. The most ancient of the Fathers have made use of these words, to prove against the Heathens the absolute Creation of the Universe. Though it were not so clearly taught here, it might be seen in the third verse: *God said: Let there be light, and there was light.* And in Ps. 148. v. 9. *He spake: and they were made: he commanded, and they were created.* If this is not expressing *Creation*, properly so called, with all the energy human language is capable of, books and words are to no purpose.

You say, Sir, "That *Creation* is clearly expressed in our translations of *Genesis*:" I conclude that it is equally so in the original. The

Latin

Latin word *creavit*, and the French word *crea*, do not more necessarily signify *Creation*, than the Hebrew word, which corresponds to them, since they are used in another sense. We say in Latin; *Principem creare*; and in French: *Créer une Charge, un Office**.

But I have already told you, that it is not on the bare letter of one or more passages of scripture, that the faith of a Catholic rests: it is on the sense and meaning of these passages fixed and determined by the constant and universal belief of the Church. When the Church put the scripture into my hands, she engaged to teach me the true sense of it: without being thus taught, this Divine book, so far from enlightening my Faith, would only increase my doubts, and Revelation would be of no advantage to me.

Thus, while I see you at an uncertainty, like a good Protestant, and racking your brain (or at least pretending to do so) about the meaning of the Hebrew; "whether *Moses* gave it such and such a sense; if it be well expressed in the versions; if the acceptation of the word hath not changed in process of time;" (discussions which return at every word, and are never done) I quietly content myself with the sense the Catholic Church hath given the word, and I believe it, without fear of being deceived.

I know you have a sovereign dislike to this method; it hath a thousand times been treated by your

* So in English: *To create a Duke, an Earl, &c.*

your brethren the Protestants as senseless, absurd, fanatic. But these words do not frighten us. I have shewn you in my fourth letter, that this way of proceeding is the only one that is sensible, certain, and proportionate to every one; and I need not to have employed any other proof, but your own concessions.

“ M. de Beaufobre has proved that the notion of *Creation* is not to be found in the ancient Theology of the Jews.” M. de Beaufobre, learned as he was, is not always in the right. When men of learning get a system into their heads, and are struck with some certain idea, they find it every where, and refer every thing to it. The Gentleman we are speaking of found *Manicheism*, and the two principles in the writings of those, who never thought of them; just as you attribute to the Fathers of the Church the very opinions they refuted: we shall soon see an example of this. If the ancient Jewish Theologians had no notion of creation, it is only since they left off reading *Moses*, to study the Philosophy of the Greeks.

“ A great many persons full of respect for our sacred books, have not however discovered in the recital of *Moses* the absolute Creation of the Universe.” We are not acquainted with “ these persons full of respect for our sacred books, and who do not see therein the Creation.” Your friends, the *Socinians*, who are those you mean, never appeared to us “ men full of respect for the sacred books.” The manner in which they twist the sense thereof, is the best proof of what has been said

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said, viz. that the text of scripture alone, were it a hundred times more clear than it is, would never be sufficiently so, to settle any one point of doctrine whatsoever, unless the meaning were determined by a divine authority; and what you yourself have said, is sufficient to make us sensible of it.

In one of your Notes, you accuse *Tertullian* of a Sophism very common, as you say, with the Fathers of the Church. *He defines the word God according to the Christians, and then accuses the Heathens of a contradiction; because, contrary to his definition, they admit of several Gods**. Undoubtedly this stroke of satire thrown out, as you go along, against the Fathers of the Church, was necessary for your own defence; for you declared at the beginning of your letter, that you had no other design therein, but to defend yourself. But the accusation is as ill-grounded, as it is foreign to your purpose. *Tertullian* makes use of no Sophism: This is his way of reasoning: "The only just and rational idea we can have of God, is to conceive him as the sovereign Being, who hath no superior, nor equal: therefore, if he have any equals, he will not be God; therefore to admit of a plurality of Gods, is to admit of none at all." It is thus you would reason yourself against a *Polytheist*, and your reasoning would be just. If you maintain that the Heathens did not admit of *Tertullian's* principle, I must desire you to tell me, what the *Romans* meant by the Epithet of *Optimus Maximus*, which they gave
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* Lct. p. 46.

to the supreme God? Is not this title equivalent to that of *Summum*, *Magnum*, on which *Tertullian* so often grounds his argument against the Heathens.

In another note you accuse the Fathers of the Church of having admitted the Eternity of matter. You cite *St Justin* the Martyr, *Origen*, *St Clement* of *Alexandria**. I own, Sir, so vague a citation as this may easily put any author to a stand. To refute it at large would require a Library, and they are not very common in the solitudes of Mount *Jura*. A man must run over seven or eight volumes in *Folio*, enter upon dissertations, compare passages; thus with one stroke of your pen you have cut out six months work for a Theologian. But luckily I am dispensed with from so long a task: as you have only copied the objection from *Le Clerc*, I shall have nothing more to do, than to transcribe the substance of the answer already given him.

St Justin, in his *Exhortation* to the *Greeks*, No. 22. teaches; "That the difference between a
" *Creator* and an *Artist* consists in this; that the
" former stands in no need of any thing but his
" own power to produce Beings; whereas the
" latter stands in need of matter to produce his
" work." And, No. 23. he proves; "That if
" matter were uncreated, God could have no power
" over it, nor could he range it as he pleased." It is thus *St Justin* believed the *Eternity* of matter.

Origen in his *Commentary* on the first chapter of *Genesis*, and on *St. John*, T. i. No. 18. proves
in

* Let. p. 50.

in exprefs terms, that Matter is not *uncreated*. And in his fecond book *De Principiis*, c. 1. No. 4, he taxes with impiety the opinion, that admits of Matter being *co-eternal* with God.

St *Clement* of *Alexandria*, in his *Exhortation to the Gentiles*, teaches: "That the will of God alone was the Creation of the world: that he alone made all, becaufe he alone is true God: that his will alone works, and that the effect follows his will alone." Obferve how he affects to repeat the word *alone*. Could all this have been faid, if God had flood in need of Matter to act on?

It is true *Origen* hath been accused of thinking that God created Matter from all Eternity; but this accusation is far from being proved, as the learned Editors of his works have remarked. And though it had been proved, you could have made no advantage of it, fince he certainly maintained that God *created* Matter.

It is true moreover that St *Justin* in the paffage cited, and St *Clement* in the fifth book of his *Stromata*, mention the opinion of *Heracitus* without difapproving of it: but they equally mention the extravagant opinions of feveral other Philofophers, without entering on the refutation of them; will you hence conclude that they admit of them? *Heracitus*, according to St *Clement* of *Alexandria*, not only held the Eternity of Matter, but that of the World; and St *Clement* mentions this without any difapprobation of it: did this Father admit alfo of the Eternity of the World? "Ah, Sir," to make ufe of your own words, "you read flight-

“ly, and cite very negligently” writings you so boldly censure. Let us go on, and consider the difficulties you form against the Fall of Man.

The Fundamental Principle of Morals, on which you ground your reasoning throughout all your works, is: “That Man is naturally good; a lover of justice and order; and that there is no original perversity in the human heart.” You conclude from hence, that Original Sin is not proved from the nature itself of man*.

If you mean only, that considering Man in himself, the mixture of good and evil that is found in him, is not such, that we can evidently from thence infer an Original Fall; that, although the Heathens themselves suspected this Fall, their arguments, drawn from thence, were not demonstrative: that absolutely speaking God might have created Man nearly such as he is; I will have no dispute with you. I am not so rash as to advance, that God could not create Man liable to death and concupiscence. When the question is, what God might have done, we must consider it more than once.”

But would it be reasoning to conclude that, because God might have done it, (which by the by is not demonstrated) that therefore he did it; that it is false to say man was created more perfect than he is at present, or that he is fallen from that perfection by sin; would this, I say, be reasoning? Is it not employing one's talents to no purpose, to build systems of Morality, and a plan of Education,

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* Emil. T. i. p. 189, Let. p. 15 & 67.

on the supposition of the absolute goodness of man, which is belied by Revelation? This plan we will examine in the following letter: for the present we must solve your difficulties.

First, according to you, *This doctrine of original sin . . . is far from being contained, in such clear, or such harsh terms, in scripture, as the Rhetorician Augustin, and our Theologians are pleased to set it up in**.

This, Sir, is the only one of all your objections which is in its proper place as to its substance, though it be very uncivil as to its form. We ought undoubtedly to set out with making ourselves certain, if God hath revealed original sin. If this Revelation were not certain, all the consequences we could draw from thence, would be inconclusive.

To prove it, we need not spend much Theological erudition. Two or three passages will be enough for judicious readers; any more would be useless to you, who already know them all. *I was conceived in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me†*. I imagine you do not adopt the ridiculous interpretation which the *Rabbins* give to these words. *As by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death: so death passed upon all men, in whom all had sinned‡*. *We were by nature, or by birth, children of wrath, even as the rest§*. *If one died for all, then all were dead||*. I shall cite you neither *Greek*,
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Latin,

* Let. p. 19. † Ps. l. 7. ‡ Rom. v. 12. § Eph. ii. 3. || 2 Cor. v. 14.

Latin, or Hebrew: if you doubt of the fidelity of my translation, you may consult the originals.

I know that there is not one of these passages that people may not wrangle about, and contrive at last to make the sense of them obscure, by heaping together the subtilties of *Origen*, of the *Pelagians*, of the *Protestants*, and criticizing on every word. But, Sir, like a true Catholic, I do not believe that the bare text of scripture, without other aid, can ever fix our faith. You have confirmed me in this persuasion, by telling me: *That human language is not sufficiently clear: that God himself, should he vouchsafe to speak to us in our own tongues, could say nothing to us, but what might afford matter of dispute: that there is no truth so clearly announced, as not to be liable to quibbles**. A reflection I find the more just, as you so often verify it by your own example. Perhaps it may not be so agreeable to your *Protestant brethren*; but I have nothing to do in making up matters between you and them.

Mind, Sir, that I might alledge as proofs all the texts of scripture, wherein *Redemption through Jesus Christ* is mentioned; where he is said to have *delivered us from the power of the Devil*, &c. besides all those, which prove the *necessity of Baptism*; these Dogmas necessarily supposing *Original Sin*. For our Religion is a well-connected system; whoever attacks any one article, shakes the belief of all the rest. If the Revelation of *Original Sin* be false, the whole Christian Faith is nothing.

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* Let. p. 57.

The Revelation therefore of *Original Sin* is not grounded upon a few detached passages of scripture, but on the whole Oeconomy of Religion, on the Faith of the Church from the time of the Apostles to this day. When St *Augustin* confuted the *Pelagians*, he only opposed to them the same language the Church had made use of against *Origen*. *Original Sin* was believed, not because St *Augustin* taught it, but because it was believed before him; because the belief of it went up from age to age as high as the Apostles, and as high as *Jesus Christ*. If St *Augustin* had taken into his head to attack it, his opinion would have been treated with no more respect than that of his antagonist *Julian*. Your assertion therefore is contrary to truth, when you say that this doctrine was started by the *Rhetorician Augustin*, as you are pleased to call him. That title of contempt, which I only called *uncivil*, deserved a stronger epithet. Know, Sir, that if St *Augustin* had been recommendable only for his natural talents, you ought to have had some regard for him; if he had only been a middling genius, you ought to have respected his virtues.

Secondly, *This Dogma of Original Sin*, according to you, is liable to terrible difficulties*. I own, Sir, there are difficulties throughout both in Religion and nature. Our understanding is very much confined, and its lights very uncertain; this you own yourself: and it is for this reason we hold the necessity of a supernatural Revelation, and of an ever-living authority to

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* Let. p. 19.

dissipate our doubts, and fix our incertitude. The difficulties that still accompany this Revelation, only appear terrible to you, because you have lost sight of the principles you laid down yourself.

This Dogma “obscures the Justice and Goodness of the Supreme Being;” That is to say, it doth not agree with the ideas you form to yourself of this *Justice* and *Goodness*: I believe it; but you forget what you have elsewhere said, viz. that “all the ideas we can have of the attributes of God, are very obscure and imperfect.” How can these ideas ever become a rule to us, of what God could or ought to have done*?

How can it be conceived, say you, that God hath created so many innocent and pure souls on purpose, to join them to guilty bodies, to contract from them a moral corruption, and to condemn them all to Hell, without any other crime than this very union, which was his own act and deed.

You express yourself, Sir, very incorrectly: at first sight I cannot tell what you mean by “guilty bodies,” and I am convinced you do not know any better yourself. God doth not create souls “on purpose to make them contract a moral corruption.” This corruption is not his first intention; for his will in the first place was, that this corruption should not be at all, since he had at first created man in a state of innocence, with every necessary facility to preserve himself in that state: it was the voluntary sin of *Adam* that disordered this œconomy. God could

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* See the First Letter.

undoubtedly have hindered this sin; but ought he to have done it? Was it agreeable to his designs that he should do it? What do you or I know of all this? I maintain that he ought not to have done it, because he did not do it; you yourself have taught, "that the ill use man makes of his liberty ought not to be imputed to Providence*."

Nor is it any truer that "God condemns souls to hell without any other crime than this very union with the body;" you ought, at least, to have said, *without any voluntary crime of their own*; and even then your proposition would not have been exact. God doth not condemn souls to Hell for Original Sin alone, as he condemns those who have freely sinned; he only deprives them of a supernatural beatitude, which he doth not owe them. If several Divines have taught that souls guilty of Original Sin only are condemned to the flames of Hell, we are under no obligation of following their opinion; the Church hath never authorized it as an article of Faith, nor condemned the contrary; it is only the Faith of the Church which I undertake to justify.

But can God, without injustice, punish the children for the sin of their parents? Yes, Sir, he can; and to apprehend in what sense he can do it, we have only to cast our eyes on the daily practice of human Justice, at which no one is scandalized. The King ennobles one of his subjects and his descendants, on condition of his paying him true allegiance.

giance. Doth this subject fail in his allegiance? The King degrades him and his whole posterity; his estate is confiscated, &c. Here then Children bear the punishment due to the sin of their Father; they are born commoners and in poverty, because they are born of a guilty father. What is there in this either unjust, absurd, or shocking?

The whole here is only the revocation of a purely gratuitous privilege. Now we hold that this is precisely the punishment God inflicts on *Original Sin*. God hath only deprived the posterity of *Adam* of a privilege, which he had gratuitously granted to our first Father: Immortality, an absolute command over the passions, a right to supernatural beatitude are not necessary appendages of our nature, but a pure favour which God hath bestowed on man, while innocent: what injustice did God do him by recalling it after his fall?

You see, Sir, in what sense those words of the scripture, which scandalize you so much, ought to be understood, that God *punisheth the iniquity of Fathers in the Children to the third generation**. This passage refers to the manner in which God treated the *Jewish* people, when they fell into Idolatry. He withdrew from them that special and miraculous protection which he afforded them, while they remained faithful to him. Then this unhappy nation fell into the hands of its enemies, suffered all the scourges of war, of slavery, of misery; then the children found themselves involved in the general

* *Exod. xx. 5.* See the First Letter.

neral calamity of the nation. There is nothing surprizing in this behaviour; God the only King, the only Monarch of the *Jewish* nation treated them, as any other Sovereign, irritated against his subjects guilty of high treason, would treat them in a similar case.

Thirdly; *But baptism cleans away Original Sin; it restores primordial innocence; we come from the font as sound of heart, as Adam came from the hands of God.* This sin therefore cannot be the cause of our inclination to evil*.

The consequence would be irrefragable, if Baptism destroyed the effects of sin, at the same time that it cleans away sin; but it doth not free us either from concupiscence, or the necessity of death, which are the penalties of sin. It restores to us innocence and a title to supernatural beatitude, but not the other privileges, which God annexed to innocence in the person of *Adam*. It is not therefore false reasoning, which you accuse us of, to attribute even now the vices of the people, not indeed to *Original Sin*, already blotted out, but to the effects of this sin, which still subsist.

You yourself are at the trouble of confirming my answer, when you object to yourself that "the effects of Baptism no where appear by any outward sign; that we do not see Christians less inclined to evil, than unbelievers." Without granting that they are *equally* so, I admit the fact, and I record your acknowledgment of it.

You

You press the same difficulty to render it more embarrassing; and affect not to answer it yourself, that you may leave the care of that to us. With pleasure, Sir, I take it on myself. *With the help we have from the Morality of the Gospel, besides Baptism, all Christians ought to be Angels: and unbelievers, who besides their original corruption, are abandoned to erroneous modes of worship, ought to be Devils*.*

This way of reasoning would be solid, if on one hand the helps of Religion were such, that Christians had not the liberty of resisting them; and if on the other hand, human nature was so far corrupted in unbelievers, that neither any spark of reason, or any feelings of conscience remained in them. But you know that neither of these suppositions can be maintained.

What answer, add you, can be given to those, who should shew me, that, with respect to mankind in general, the effects of a Redemption purchased at so great a price, are reduced almost to nothing? I answer for you again, that there is not the least fear, that ever any one should shew you a fact so false. The efficacy of the Redemption of mankind consists in this, that God, moved by the merits of Jesus Christ, hath given all men the means of knowing him, and coming to salvation; means which a very great number have made use of already, and of which a greater number may still make use, and will make use of to the end of the world. Is this a Redemption which is reduced to almost nothing?

Fourthly,

* Let. p. 40.

Fourthly, according to the Catholic Dogma, *we are sinners on account of the sin of our first Father; but why was our first Father himself a sinner? Why will not the same method, by which you explain his sin, be applicable to his descendants, without Original Sin**?

. It is astonishing that so grave an author as you are, should play thus on a mere equivocal term. We are sinners on account of the sin of our "first Father." If by *sinners* you mean being *inclined to sin*, it is true; if you mean *capable of sinning*, it is false. We are *inclined to sin* through concupiscence, which is an effect of Original Sin; and we are *capable of sin* through free will, which is an appendage of our nature. On the other hand, our first Father was capable of sin like us, because he had *Free Will*; but he was not *inclined to sin* so much as we are, because he had not an unbridled concupiscence like us.

Original Sin, continue you, *explains every thing, except its own principle, and this principle is the very thing we want explained.* If by the principle of sin you mean the *inclination to sin*, or *concupiscence*, Original Sin explains it very well, and better than your system; if you mean the *power of sinning*, or *Free Will*, Original Sin neither doth explain it, nor ought to explain it.

You only can see man in the hands of the Devil, but I see how he fell into his hands. The discovery is really extraordinary, to see how man, capable of
sin-

* Let. p. 21 & 22.

finning by his own free will, fell into the hands of the Devil. No one but yourself could ever have found it out. Excuse me, I beg of you, from making any remarks on what you add, (as you go on in the same strain) and on the ridiculousness of the triumph you attribute to yourself, for having so well gone up to the first principle*.

Fifthly, You pretend that concupiscence is not the effect of Original Sin. *To spurn at an useless and arbitrary prohibition is a natural inclination . . . agreeable to the order of things, and the right constitution of man ; since he would be incapable of self-preservation, unless he had a very lively love for himself, and the maintenance of all his rights, as he received them from nature**. What we call concupiscence is nothing else, but this lively love man hath for himself, and for his liberty.

You first of all are in the wrong to suppose, that the prohibition laid on our first Father was an "useless prohibition." Did not God owe to himself an exaction of a mark of obedience from Adam, as an homage due to his supreme power ? Can this homage be looked on as arbitrary and superfluous ?

It is a natural inclination in man to love his liberty, and to spurn against every law that lays it under any restraint ; but this inclination may be more or less violent, more or less submissive to reason. When God created man, did he necessarily give him this inclination in that degree of vivacity, which we experience in ourselves ? Is that degree

* Let. p. 23. † Let. p. 22. Note.

degree of vivacity so necessary to our preservation, that this would be impossible, if we had less command over ourselves? You will affirm it without doubt, not to run back from what you have said; but on what will you ground your affirmation?

The ancient Philosophers, you know, judged otherwise. By reflecting on the tyranny of our inclinations, they conjectured that human nature must have fallen from a more perfect state. I have already taken notice, that their reasoning was not demonstrative: it is only by Revelation that we know Original Sin, and the degradation of man: without Revelation, we should not have known for certain, whether concupiscence was the effect of Original Sin, or an appendage of nature. For, once more, Sir, I am not either so rash as those, who pretend God could not create *Adam* with concupiscence; nor so bold as you, who insinuate, that God could not create him without it, as it was necessary to his preservation. God alone knows what he can do; Revelation is confined to teach me what he hath done, and I go no further. It teaches me that God made man free from concupiscence and death; and consequently, though both one and the other be, absolutely speaking, natural to man, they are not so in the present state of things, but only a consequence of Sin.

The order broken by Adam appears less a real prohibition, than paternal advice; it was an admonition to abstain from a fruit, that would cause death. This idea is certainly more agreeable to, that which we ought to have of the Goodness of God, and even

to the text of Genesis, than that which the Doctors are pleased to give us*.

If I had known you to be a person of less learning than you are, I should have been tempted to believe that you had not read the text of *Genesis*, or that you did not perceive the full force of the words. Here follows the text; I will translate it from the original, to leave you no room for quibbling about the versions; you will see that ours is very faithful. *And the Lord God laid his commands on Adam, saying: of all the fruit in the garden thou shalt eat; but of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat†. Who hath made known to thee thy nakedness, only that thou hast eaten of the fruit, which I forbade thee to eat of‡.* I can assure you, that the Hebrew tongue hath not a stronger word to express a rigorous order, or a strict prohibition.

But if it had not been so, what would you have gotten by it. If the order of God had only been paternal advice, why doth he pronounce this dreadful sentence against *Adam*? *Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee, that thou shouldst not eat; cursed shall be the earth, when thou shalt till it; thou shalt eat its fruit with sorrow all the days of thy life: it shall bring forth for thee thorns and thistles, and thou shalt eat thy bread in the sweat of thy brow, till thou returnest to the earth, from whence thou wast taken§.* Why doth God drive

Adam

* Let. p. 22. Note. † Gen. ii. 16. ‡ Ib. iii. 17.
§ Ib. iii. 17, &c.

Adam out of Paradise, and render the approach to it inaccessible, lest he stretch out his hand to the tree of life, and eating of the fruit thereof he should live for ever*. Would it not have been much shorter to have said, that all this history related in *Genesis* is a fable, since it agrees so little with the ideas you form to yourself of the Goodness of God? You see he speaks here as harshly at least as *St Augustin* or the Theologians? God is Good, and infinitely Good; he is Just, and infinitely Just; but we have only imperfect ideas, as you own, of his Goodness and of his Justice: ought you therefore to be surpris'd, if the conduct of God should not always appear conformable to these ideas?

Seventhly, *Considering the sin of Adam in all its circumstances, we can only find therein a very slight fault; nevertheless, according to them, (the Doctors) what a dreadful punishment! . . . To be condemned both himself and all his posterity to death in this world, and to pass an eternity in the other, devoured by the fire of Hell†.*

You are wrong informed, Sir, concerning our belief: I have already told you, that the Doctors (at least the Catholic Doctors) do not teach that *Adam*, together with all his posterity, was condemned, for Original Sin alone, to be devoured by the flames of hell for all eternity. *St Thomas*, with the torrent of Divines, after a great number of the Fathers of the Church, expressly maintain the contrary. They affirm, and they prove it,

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that

* Gen. iii. 22. † Let. p. 23. Note.

that the only penalty inflicted on Original Sin in the other life, is the privation of supernatural Beatitude, or of the intuitive Vision of God. If some have chosen to embrace the opposite opinion, it is no rule for any one to follow, the Church hath not adopted it.

We own that *Adam* and all his posterity were condemned to temporal death; but this is the natural destiny of human nature; it is only a punishment in the present state of things, because *Adam* had been exempted from it by a purely gratuitous privilege.

We will moreover acknowledge that this punishment, added to a life of misery here, is dreadful; but we will not grant you, what you assert with so much confidence, "that none, but a very slight fault, can be found in all the circumstances of *Adam's* Sin." To judge safely hereof, we must have informations, which you cannot have; we must estimate the importance and the motive of the law; the powerful aids granted to fulfil it; the degree of violence in the temptation; and who can judge of these but God? There is therefore a deal of rashness in pronouncing on what surpasses your understanding; but it is your plan to censure the conduct of God with the same liberty, as you blame that of man.

You say: "The fault of *Adam* appears very slight," therefore God ought not to have punished it with severity. A Christian says on the contrary: "God severely punished the sin of *Adam*;" "this Revelation teaches me: therefore the sin of
" *Adam*

"*Adam* must have been a most grievous fault." Which of these two is the more solid way of reasoning? You go upon the idea which you form to yourself, of the fall of *Adam*, of which you can neither know the nature nor the circumstances: the Christian grounds himself solely and precisely on what Revelation hath declared. You therefore attack what is clear by what is obscure, instead of taking what is clear to judge of what is obscure.

Take notice, Sir, of the little solidity there is in your objections. The whole of them tend to prove, that the Doctrine of Original Sin is not agreeable to the Goodness and Justice of God, according to the ideas you form of these attributes. To feel the force of your argument, it must be drawn up in this manner: "I have clear, just, and distinct ideas of the Justice and Goodness of God: but the Dogma of Original Sin doth not agree with these ideas: it is therefore false." Your major, or first proposition, on which the whole strength of the argument rests, is exactly the contradictory proposition to the principle you have laid down in another place*, and which is the foundation of my answers. What you add over and above, is falsely imputing to us a doctrine we do not hold.

All the "terrible difficulties" therefore which you had to oppose to the Catholic Doctrine regarding Original Sin, are come to this! The effort ought not to have been very painful. The Divines

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were

* See the First Letter.

were no strangers to these difficulties, and never were at a loss how to answer them. We are now, Sir, going on towards a subject that concerns you more nearly; it is your plan of Education; we shall pay a particular attention to it.

I am, Sir, &c.

END of the SEVENTH LETTER.

L E T.



L E T T E R VIII.

On the Method of teaching Religion ; or on the new Plan of Education proposed in Emilius.

YOU could not, Sir, have employed your talents on a subject more essential to the happiness of society, than the education of youth ; but it were to be wished, that less desirous of giving us a new system, you had applied yourself to the correction of what is defective in the received mode of Education. Should your labour have had less eclat, perhaps it had been more useful. Nothing could have been a stronger proof of your zeal for the good of humanity, than to have sacrificed the glory of surprising us, to the satisfaction of informing us. Men do not pass in a moment from one extreme to another. In the supposition, that our present mode of education is as essentially defective as you pretend it is, it would be a fruitless undertaking to endeavour to carry it all at once to the most sovereign degree of perfection. Something must be allowed to the weakness of nature, and the empire of custom : to offend the public under pretence of reforming

ing them, is never the true way to succeed. Before Angels and Heroes are created for future ages, it would not be improper to endeavour to form men for the present generation.

But after all you was resolved to go to the fountain head, and create a system; provided it were true and advantageous, its being unheard of before was of small consequence: we must therefore confine ourselves to the examination of the effects it may produce. Before we see what we ought to think of it, let us first know what you think of it yourself.

You seem convinced that it is almost impracticable: *I am sensible of these difficulties, I own them, perhaps they may be unfurmountable . . . I point out the end we ought to aim at; I do not say that we can ever come at it; but I say, he that comes the nearest to it, will have succeeded best**. Though we could put it in practice, we should not be the farther advanced; you doubt also of its efficacy. You are for hindering men from becoming wicked; but you durst not affirm that *in the present state of things it was absolutely possible†*. In real truth, Sir, never was doubt better grounded.

In a word, to give us a clear idea of the merit of your method, you offer it only as a dream. *Nobody studies, nobody makes observations, they dream, and instead of Philosophy, give us the dreams of a few restless nights. It may be told me, that I am dreaming myself; I will not deny it; but I give my*

* Emil. T. i. p. 195.

† Let. p. 18.

my dreams for nothing else but dreams, which others take care not to do; and I leave it to my readers to judge, if they can be of any advantage to such as are awake.* You are to be esteemed for your sincerity; but if tired with dreaming so long, you had been pleased to awake before the end of your book, you would have done us a piece of service.

It would therefore be but an indifferent employment of our time to discuss at length the whole series of your method; it would require a book larger than your own; it will suffice to examine what may concern Religion: it is the only object I have proposed to myself.

You own that your system is grounded on the supposition of the "original goodness of man," a supposition, which in speculation is no more than a mere possibility, and which Revelation expressly contradicts; this we have already seen. Your own confession therefore is enough to proscribe it: you do not deny, but that the method you propose, is extremely difficult, not to say impossible; you dare not insure its success. Who therefore will be so imprudent as to make the trial, and run the risk it exposes to.

God forbid I should pretend that our present manner of educating youth, is without fault; but, instead of having recourse to new systems, it would perhaps be better to return back to the ancient ones. Our forefathers were as good as we are, at the least; and if we had been brought up like them, it
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* Emil. T. i. p. 259. Note.

may be presumed we should have been as good as they were.

Neither do I pretend to insinuate that your plan does not contain many very useful observations; others had gone before you in this labour; and it would have been a great piece of ill luck, if four volumes had contained nothing else but wrong notions: but in the main it is certainly defective; I have already shewn, that your own confession is enough to make us reject it.

One of the principal Lessons you inculcate is, that no mention ought to be made of God, or of Religion to a child till he comes to the age of eighteen or twenty. According to you, he cannot, before this age, have a right notion of God: *Every child that believes in God, is an Idolater or an Anthropomorphite, since he always forms to himself some image of God**. You would not allow young people to have any Religion, before their judgment is capable of feeling the truth thereof.

Give me leave, Sir, to make one observation. With regard to three-fourths and an half of mankind, education cannot be carried on any longer than to the twelfth, or at the farthest to the fifteenth year of their age: when this age is past, a young man takes wing, and engages in some state of life, some take to the army, others to trade, others to the arts, many marry. Shall we leave our fellow-citizens in these different states of life, without the knowledge of God, and without Religion:

gion ; or must we bring them to School again at five and twenty years of age to make Christians of them ?

Now three-fourths and a half of mankind are an object worthy of some consideration : and if so large a portion of mankind are to have no knowledge of God, till they are at leisure to acquire this knowledge by system ; it is very much to be feared that the remaining part will easily persuade themselves that they also can do without it.

I am surely very favourable to you, when I allow you twelve of fifteen years of education for the generality of men. You know that the common people, who are at least the three fourths of our species, cannot employ all that time therein. As soon as a child is able to work, necessity obliges him to do it to gain his bread ; and when he is once taken up with the care of this, there is no more time for private instructions. Your fine plan of a negative Education is impracticable with respect to all these poor creatures ; their Fathers and Mothers have something else to do. Thus then are they come to the age of the Passions, without any resource against them, as they are without Religion. But is the season of the rising Passions a favourable situation for receiving the first tincture of Religion ? Shall we coolly expose three-fourths of our brethren to the hazard of remaining till death without any knowledge of God, without any hopes of another life, particularly as they can have no other comfort in this ? Must they live without morals,
without

without conscience, without any preservative against crime ; what will become of society ?

Is it really true that a child is not capable of knowing God, or of having any Religion, till he is twenty years of age ? Among the greatest part of civilized nations, a young man of fourteen or fifteen years of age is authorized by the laws to dispose of himself, and enter into engagements. From that time he is a member of society, obliged to fulfil the duties thereof, and consequently to know them : would it be more difficult to know and observe those of Religion, which are the ground-work of the former ?

It is wonderful, Sir, that having studied the genius of children with so much attention, they should appear to you so stupid. Let those be examined, who have spent their whole lives in bringing them up ; all will assure you, that from the age, which we call the age of reason, that is, when it begins to unfold itself, many children are capable of reflection, propose questions with a sense that astonishes, lay hold of the first principles of the sciences with a surprising facility. You own yourself that there are instances of ripe geniuses, who seem not to pass through infancy, *who are men almost as soon as they are born**. Ought not an exception to be made at least in favour of these ? Shall we believe that God, whose will it is to be known, hath rendered this knowledge so difficult, that a
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* Emil. T. i. p. 236.

man must be a Philosopher, and a great Philosopher too to attain it? From the most tender age we see some very happy dispositions; some children who seem born to virtue; whose souls expand themselves at the recital of the Actions of our Saviour, and the Lessons of his Gospel. Shall we be so barbarous as to stifle this tender shoot, and refuse these innocent souls the satisfaction of raising up their hands towards their Creator, when he himself declares that he takes a pleasure in being *praised by the mouths of children**? Will he reject these tender homages, because they are not as yet accompanied with all the understanding they may have hereafter? I am sensible, Sir, I am speaking to you a language you do not understand; perhaps you have never tasted how attractive Piety is; but what you do not feel, humanity feels; and every heart, not as yet corrupted, shuts itself up against your dangerous Lessons.

Every one acknowledges that infancy is the precious time for enriching the memory; for laying up a provision of proper terms and ideas; for learning the first elements of each science. By what fatal distinction will the terms, the ideas, the elements of Religion be excluded this acquisition, and be thrown aside, as an useless piece of furniture? These ideas of Religion will not be more exact than those of the other sciences, which are taught children; but they will unfold themselves with time. They will not fail to make a deep impression on

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the mind ; and this is all we desire. If the passions should lull them asleep for a moment, they will awaken afterwards. How many Libertines have returned from their errors, by means of those principles of Religion, which they had received in their early infancy ? If your system had any truth in it, children ought to be taught nothing at all.

You tell us there are virtues, which children ought to be taught by imitation, by practising them in their presence. *In an age, when the heart as yet feels nothing, there is a necessity of making children imitate those actions, of which we want to give them a habitude, till they can perform them with discernment, and for the love of what is good.* You justly remark, *that man is imitative, . . . that a taste for imitation, is the effect of a good natural disposition**. Why therefore may we not follow this method in teaching children Religion, which is also a virtue ? Why are they not to be made to imitate early practices of piety, a strong habitude of which is essentially necessary, “ till they can “ perform them with discernment, and for the “ love” of God ? *Man is imitative* : in this consists all the magic of Education : let a child have nothing before his eyes, but models of virtue, he will never become vicious ; if he be surrounded with examples of piety, he will contract a taste for it.

But you have demonstrated it, (and that is saying all) *that every child, who believes in God, is an Idolater,*

* Emil, T. iii. p. 132.

later, or Anthropomorphite: These are frightful words; but you appeal to every one of your Readers, *if, when in his childhood he believed in God, he did not always form to himself some image of him**? Here, Sir, I am bolder than you, and that is being very bold: for I appeal to every one that believes in God at the age of fifty; I appeal to you yourself; if, every time you form to yourself an idea of God, of a spirit, of your own soul, your imagination doth not sport at the same instant, and present you, at first, with a sort of indefinite figure? But what doth this illusion of the imagination, which reason disavows, prove? Are you an *Idolater* upon that account? Must we, through a panic dread of this pretended Idolatry, refrain, during our whole lives, from thinking of God?

But they are not children alone, according to you, who cannot believe in God, without forming to themselves some image of him; the common people also, and in general all, who are not Philosophers, are in the same predicament. *This word Spirit hath no meaning for any one, who hath not philosophized; a Spirit is nothing else but a body to the common people and children†.* Consequently we must avoid making God known, not only to children, but also to the common people, and to every one, who hath not philosophized, for fear of making them *Idolaters* and *Anthropomorphites*. Thus, by your decision, three-fourths and an half of mankind are condemned during their whole lives to be ignorant, whe-

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* Let. p. 35. † Emil. T. ii. p. 315.

ther there be a God or no. What do I say? Three-fourths? Amongst a thousand men scarce shall we find one, who hath philosophized. So that the knowledge of God is to be allowed only to the thousandth part of our species! Is it possible, Sir, with all your penetration; that you should not be sensible of the consequences which flow from your principles!

You take a deal of pains to prove that the knowledge of God is not always necessary; and that God may possibly not require it of children. Let us suppose, for a moment, that this is true. Therefore must we not give them any knowledge of God? The consequence is false. Though this knowledge were not necessary, it is sufficient that it be useful. Now, cannot a confused idea of God be of help to preserve a child from vice? And, the whole considered, would it not be better to have an imperfect Religion than none at all? *All the nations of the world, say you, not even excepting the Jews, have represented God as Corporeal; and how many Christians, and especially Catholics, are still in the same case*?* The accusation is false in every part, but I am willing again to suppose it true. This gross idea of God hath nevertheless contributed to make them virtuous; why should it not produce the same effect in children, till their reason comes to a more distinct knowledge of God?

If God doth not exact being known of such as are incapable of knowing him, he exacts it at least
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of such as are capable of knowing him, and consequently it is his will to be made known to such as are susceptible of that knowledge, according to the degree of their capacity. If he doth not punish such as know him not, he certainly will punish those Preceptors, who have neglected to make him known to their Pupils. Because children are not as yet capable of receiving such sublime notions of the Deity, as a Philosopher may have; doth it follow that they are to be deprived of those imperfect notions, which their reason, now forming, is already susceptible of? The inconvenience I before objected to you, recurs here afresh: so many savage and barbarous nations, who, as you pretend, never can know God of themselves; the lower class of people among us, whose stupidity you so much exaggerate, are not to be taught the existence of a God, lest they should form to themselves a wrong idea of him. What difference do you make between whole nations consisting of stupid, ignorant people, and children? None at all; because "the former will be children as long as they live:" You therefore condemn them to die without knowing God; and for fear of making them *Idolaters*, we must take great care not to make them *Christians*.

See, Sir, how condescending I am to you; you ought to take it kindly of me. I allow you to take it for granted, that a child of fifteen years of age is not capable, of himself, of knowing God; I allow you also to take it for granted, that God doth not require this of him; I allow you to take it for

granted, that he cannot think of God, without forming to himself some image of him : with all these suppositions granted you, you have as yet proved nothing at all, because you have proved too much. If you conclude that Religion ought not to be mentioned to children ; much less then is it to be mentioned to the ignorant vulgar : but the salvation of the vulgar seems not to give you much concern.

But as to me, Sir, it is my daily employment, and an object that interests me in a very sensible manner. I ask you again ; What must we do with these poor people, “ who cannot think, or reason ; “ who, according to you, cannot raise themselves “ to the knowledge of God, or form to themselves “ a Religion* ;” whose understanding is too dull to feel the force of your Demonstrations ; what, I say, must we do with these poor people ? Must they continue on without any Religion ? From whom must they receive any ? From the Learned ? “ But all men are Liars†,” and the Learned are as much so, and often more, than others ; will they then be obliged to believe them ? Must they receive a Religion from God ? But “ God cannot reveal to “ us, what we cannot comprehend ;” and, according to you, “ the common people can comprehend “ nothing at all, not even the proofs of the existence of a God.” Must they learn it from the Laws of the state ? But these Laws have no other object, but exterior actions ; never did any Legislator, never

* Let. p. 42. † *ib.*



never did any Sovereign take it into his head to command People to believe and hope in God, under afflictive Penalties. Will you then, who have such a love for mankind, thus leave almost the whole of them, without the least provision for their future lot? There is not a single word, in all your writings, about directing these poor people what they are to do. Happy it is for them, that God himself hath done it in the manner we have already seen.

On the same principle you still maintain, that a Child at ten years of age is not capable of discerning Good from Evil, or Vice from Virtue: *I think I have demonstrated this a thousand times in my two first volumes, and particularly in the Dialogue between the Master and the Child concerning what is Evil**. This, Sir, is your ordinary style; you have proved every thing, you have demonstrated every thing, you have placed every thing in the clearest light. There is nothing more easy than to say so; your admirers take your word for it, and you aim at nothing more. Notwithstanding the decisive tone of your assertions, I have not found one demonstration in all your works, except with regard to such points, as have been demonstrated by others, before you handled them.

Let us see, I pray, this pretended Demonstration. You say "a Master will never make his Pupil, at ten years of age, comprehend why it is evil to lie or disobey; that Locke himself
" would

“ would be at a loss how to do it ;” you are very curious to know what reason can be given him for it, as you give none yourself *. This is the whole of your proof. Without being so ingenious as either *Locke* or you, may not one say to a child thus : “ Were a Person to tell you a lie, when you asked him a question, would it not vex you ? Would you not be angry at being deceived, when you wanted to know any thing ? Ought you to vex another, when you would not like to be vexed yourself ? You know that you ought not to use ill either your servant or your play-fellow, because you would not like to be ill used yourself ; therefore you ought not to tell him a lie, or to deceive him, because you would not like to be deceived yourself.”

He will likewise comprehend that, since he would have his dog obey him, and do what he bids him ; since he punishes him for his disobedience, “ he ought himself to obey his master, or be punished for his disobedience.” You will tell me the comparison is not exact ; I own it ; but it suffices to awaken in children that *Inward Sentiment*, which, according to you, is the Interpreter both of Religion and the Law of Nature. What other reason will you yourself give a man at thirty years of age ?

It is wrong therefore in you to advance, that *To want to teach children to tell the truth, is only teaching them to lie†*. It is wrong again in you to suppose

* Emil. T. iii. . . 179. † Ib. T. i. p. 224.

pose it demonstrated, that we cannot give a child, at least an imperfect knowledge of God, and of the principal duties of Morality; the contrary is rather demonstrated by reason and experience. If it may be done, why is it not to be done?

Your reason is plain and simple: *I would have youth have a Religion; but I would teach them nothing, of which their judgment was not capable of perceiving the truth†.* That is to say, according to the method you prescribe throughout, that you would not have your pupil believe any thing, but what is demonstrated to him; thus you are for reducing all Religion to a system of Philosophy.

We have already seen the absurdities and inconveniences of this system. What is the most remarkable, and most striking, is, that you abandon it yourself, the moment the question is no longer about forming the man of learning or the Philosopher. It looks as if you wanted to retract in the fourth Volume, whatever you had said in the preceding ones, against the ordinary method of teaching Religion.

In speaking of the Education of Girls, you look upon "the Idea of Religion as above their conception:" *For this very reason, add you, I would speak to these about Religion more early; for if we must wait till they are in a condition to discuss methodically these profound questions, there would be a great risk of never speaking to them at all about it . . . their belief is in subjection to authority. Every Girl*

Girl ought to have the same Religion her Mother hath, and every Wife that of her Husband . . . As they are not able to judge for themselves, they ought to receive the decision of their Fathers and Husbands, as that of the Church . . . Since authority is to regulate the Religion of the Women, the case is not so much to explain to them the reasons for believing so and so; as to lay before them, in a clear manner, what is believed.*

Alas! Sir, how much is the unhappy sex to be pitied! It is no longer Evidence and Reason that regulate Faith†; the Faith of women is in *subjection to authority*. In order to believe in God, Women must renounce the judgment they have received from him‡. Every Article of their Religion are Mysteries to them, and consequently absurdities: they are obliged to believe them on the word of their Husbands, and thus to *submit the authority of God, who speaks to their Reason, to the authority of men§*.

But they will answer, for women know how to answer; “We are neither Brutes nor Machines, “we have received a judgment from God, as well “as men have; *We must have reasons for submitting “our Reason*, but none are given us. No pains “are taken to explain to us even the Reasons for “believing. Our Husbands are a set of impious “wretches, to require that we should give the same “credit to their word, as to the word of God; “that we should pay a blind obedience to them; “that we should render them a worship, which is “due

* Emil. T. iv. p. 72. † Ib. p. 74. ‡ Emil. T. iii. p. 6. § Ib. p. 145.

“ due only to God*. According to the Principles
 “ of *M. Rousseau*, we should then indeed be *Idiots*,
 “ *Fanatics*, and *Hypocrites*: We are made to tell lies,
 “ when we say our Catechism†; all we get by
 “ learning it in our infancy, is learning betimes to
 “ tell lies, &c. &c.†.”

It will be well for you, if none of them have read your book; for if any of them have read it, they will have the whole third volume to object against you; what answer will you give them? None at all; we ought never to answer women.

If the Examination of the Principles of Religion be above the conception of women, you will agree without doubt, that it is not less above the capacity of the common people; “ we must therefore
 “ begin betimes to speak to the common people
 “ about religion: were we to wait till they were
 “ capable of discussing in a methodical manner
 “ these profound questions, there would be a great
 “ risk of never speaking at all to them about religion.” Now, according to you, *'tis the People that make up the bulk of Mankind: what is not the People, is so trifling, as not to be worth while counting*‖. It is at most only the thousandth part of our species; but let us set them aside for a moment.

According to the method you prescribe for women, “ the Belief of mankind ought to be in subjection to authority,” but not to a human authority, as that of Fathers, and Husbands, but to a Divine Authority, which is that of the Church;
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* Emil. T. iv. p. 88. Let. p. 132. † Emil. T. iv. p. 77. ‡ Ib. T. ii. p. 322. || Ib. T. ii. p. 208.

“ the people, not being in a condition to judge for themselves, ought to receive the decision of the Pastors of the Church, as that of God.” But while we subject them to this authority, they ought to be treated with more humanity than you shew to the women ; we must give them reasons for their submission. We ought not only to explain to them in a clear manner, what they are to believe, but to teach them moreover, why they are to believe it ; viz. because God, knowing how incapable we are of judging by ourselves of what we ought to believe, hath appointed a Public Ministry, a visible authority to teach us ; and this appointment is proved by the preaching of *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles, and by a successive Mission of Pastors, who this day fill their places.

Thus, Sir, after having declaimed so long against the way of authority in matters of Religion, you are forced to have recourse to it yourself with regard to women, and consequently with regard to the common people. Reason, prevailing in you over the interest of a system, obliges you at last to own, that it is the only way of instruction proportionate to the capacity of the common people ; and “ it is the *common people* which makes up the bulk of *Mankind*.” All the objections you have made use of against this method, recoil now on you with their full force ; you are obliged to contradict your own Principles, and refute yourself.

The established usage of instructing the people early in Religion, is not only convenient, but necessary ; if they hear nothing of it in their infancy, there

there is danger of their never knowing it : as your method was not designed for the *common People*, it is not adapted to *Mankind*.

For whom then have you been labouring ? For whom have you laid down, at a great expence, a Plan of Education and of Religion ? For *what is not the People* ; but that, according to you, *is so trifling, as not to be worth counting*. Can we believe that God ever arranged his designs, as you have the plan of your labour, only in favour of such *as are not worth counting* ? No, Sir ; the design of God was to instruct the whole human race, and not a handful of vain Wits, who consider themselves as a particular species. He is the Father of all ; he hath not appointed one Religion for the common People, and another for Men of Learning. He doth not propose saving some by *Faith*, and the others by *Reason* ; Men by the *light of nature*, and women by the *authority of his word*. As the former only served to lead man astray, and make false sages, *he was pleased to save the world, and the whole world, by the folly of preaching**.

Acknowledge, Sir, then, that your whole system is a mere whim. You object to us, that *Revelation renders Man proud†* ; and you have the pride to believe, that God hath made an exception from his general laws, in favour of you and a few men of learning ; that when he settled the plan of the salvation of the world, he distinguished you from the crowd ; that while he requires of others

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* 1 Cor. i. 21.

† Emil. T. iii. p. 123.

a submission to his word, he hath left you at liberty to obey only your own lights. As for us, we have not the vanity to claim this privilege; though appointed to teach the People; we make it a point of duty to believe as humbly as they do; and we had rather be saved by believing with the multitude, than by reasoning with the Philosophers. We begin therefore by submitting to the law which God orders us to propose in his name; while you, from your tribunal on high, impose on women, and the common people the yoke of Faith, from the bearing of which you dispense with yourself.

But they are not to receive this yoke from your hands, because you are not qualified to subject them to it. Since your Lessons were not designed for the human kind, as you are forced to own, you might have dispensed with yourself from giving them.

And in reality your manner of instructing is directly opposite to that which *Jesus Christ* appointed to be followed. When he thought proper to trace out a Plan of Education (for one he hath traced out, and it is the Gospel) and to send Preceptors to mankind, who were still in their Childhood, he gave them no orders to make use of argumentation; he did not give them, for their Credentials, the art of building up systems, and of forging syllogisms; but the power of astonishing reason by prodigies and miracles. One of them, who taught at least in as learned a manner as you do, frankly declared, that *his preaching was not in the persuasive words of human Wisdom, but in shewing the sensible effects*

effects of the Spirit and Power of God, that the faith of those he preached to, might not rest on the Wisdom of men, but on the Power of God*.

As you take the quite opposite road, it may be presumed that your success will be also different. The Instructions of St Paul made Christians, and true Sages; yours will form Unbelievers and Madmen. The important service your plan of Education will render to society, will be to teach a set of rash young people to believe in God, as you do, that is to say, as they please, and as far as they shall judge proper; to give them a Religion like your own, which consists in not believing any one Dogma of the Gospel; in a word, to produce a set of Geniuses as singular as yourself. But may Heaven, Sir, preserve us from this! For if ever your doctrine comes to be followed, mankind is lost.

But let us take heart: God never will permit Infidelity to become an epidemical disorder; your system will have the fate of so many others, which our age daily brings forth. You will add to the number of authors, learned by inspiration, who teach what they never knew themselves; the art of Government, without ever having governed; the art of War, without ever having been present at a battle; Navigation without ever having seen the sea, unless in a picture. They demonstrate every thing on paper; write Dissertations, till they lose sight of what they are about; blame right or wrong. An ignorant

reader admires them, and thinks he is listening to so many oracles; but a man who understands the business, shrugs up his shoulders, throws away the book, and curses the eloquence of the author.

You know, Sir, that it is a very common foible among too many, to be for reforming every thing, to talk of every thing, without having examined any thing; of Theology, for instance, without having read the Gospel; of Religion, without knowing their Catechism, and to supply the place of arguments by a Cynical style, and a decisive tone. You have used very severe invectives against this tone: but unfortunately you could not keep yourself sufficiently clear of the infection. By way of reparation for the censures you have cast on the present generation, you are sometimes so complaisant as to copy its absurdities. *If, among us, children talk like men, the reason is, because the men are still children**. So much the better for you; they are the less able to perceive the weakness of your arguments. You owe the best part of your reputation to the childhood of your admirers: instead of truths, you furnish them with wit and pretty phrases; and they are pleased with them.

One of the advantages of modern Christianity is, that of having formed a jargon of words without ideas, with which every thing is satisfied, but reason†. Never did either ancient or modern Christianity pique itself on satisfying reason, in the sense you mean. St Paul did not pique himself on it,

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* Lct. p. 36. † Ib.

as he expressly declares. If his authority doth not move you, I have one that is still greater to oppose to you, which is your own. Give me leave to transcribe once more the confession you have made; you will see, that whether you will or no, you also profess modern Christianity. *But if I come to discover successively these attributes of God, of which I have no absolute idea, it is by forced consequences, and the right use of my reason: but I affirm them, without comprehending them: and that, in the main, is affirming nothing at all*.* I ask you, if it satisfies reason “to affirm attributes without comprehending them, “without affirming any thing in the main, without “being able to discover them, but by forced consequences, without having any absolute idea of “them?” You therefore are equally guilty with us of “this Jargon of words without ideas.” And take notice, if you please, Sir, that this is what you yourself call “making a good use of reason;” in this I agree with you, and I set out with you by proving it.

It is not necessary to lengthen out our observations on your plan of Education; it is but too well proved, that the harm it may do, cannot be compensated by any good it can do. It is a pity that a great number of sensible observations on the steps we ought to take with children to teach them the Arts and Sciences, are drowned in a chaos of vague, metaphysical, obscure, and often false reflections on the nature of man, on his obligations,

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* Emil. T. iii. p. 89. Let. p. 54.

on his destination. Through a desire of diving too deep into your subject, you lose sight of it every moment; you change into empty speculations a treatise, which ought chiefly to consist of precepts, and examples. You address yourself only to the most sublime Geniuses on what interests all mankind;—thus you neglect the instruction of those, who stand most in need of instructions and knowledge. It mortifies me to tell you, that you have missed your aim, and that with less wit, you had met with more success.

I am, Sir, &c.

END of the EIGHTH LETTER.

L E T.



L E T T E R IX.

*On the Agreement of Christianity with sound
Policy.*

IT is with reluctance, Sir, I find myself engaged to treat with you on a subject, which is beyond my sphere, and which much surpasses my weak knowledge. I have already declared to you that I understand nothing about Politics, and that it doth not become me to talk on that subject. Nothing appears to me more becoming a wise man, than to leave the care of clearing up different subjects to those, who are obliged, by their station in life, to apply themselves to the particular study of them; to leave the science of Government to those, whom God hath appointed to govern; Jurisprudence to the Magistrate; Theology to the Clergy. Vanity often makes people take the pen in hand, who neither know their own talents, nor understand the subject they take it into their heads to write on; their bad success ought to serve as a preservative against this distemper.

Not

Not to expose myself to the same ridicule, I will avoid all general speculation on Politics; I will content myself with following step by step, what you have said concerning Religion in the Eighth Chapter of the Fourth Book on *social Compact*; but without exactly copying all your words, this would carry us too far. I hope to shew you that there is scarce a single expression, which doth not deserve censure; that of all your works it is most imperfect, the least digested, and it looks as if your only aim in it, had been to destroy all subordination and Religion.

According to your usual method, you begin, Sir, with an historical falsity and a contradiction. It is a falsehood to advance that "Mankind at first had no other *Kings*, but the *Gods*, nor other form of *Government*, but *Theocracy*." With the first people Fathers were real Sovereigns in their families, and the history of mankind informs us, that such was the origin and model of the first Governments. To render this fact doubtful, you have contented yourself with throwing an air of ridicule on *King Adam*, and *the Emperor Noah**. Thus you thought to destroy the authority of the Bible by a frigid piece of raillery.

You add, *Sentiments and Ideas must have been a long time altering, before men could resolve on taking a fellow-creature for a master, and flatter themselves that it would be for their good*. Children did not take their Fathers for their Masters, but God

* Soc. Comp. B. i. Ch. 2.

God and Nature established that authority. Gratitude due to a Father for the care taken of their education, the knowledge which age and experience give him in order to judge of what is for the good of the family; the natural affection which obliges him to endeavour to procure it at the expence of his own ease, are so many bands that keep Children in the most just and most advantageous of all dependencies.

But, according to you, *Children are no longer connected with their Father, than while they stand in need of his assistance for their own preservation. When this becomes needless, . . . they enter again into the state of Independence**. If we are born independent, we are not born for society; society cannot subsist without subordination. If even the absolute necessity of self-preservation no longer subsisted to unite mankind together, would not the natural desire of their own welfare be sufficient to keep them in society?

The whole of this doctrine is a contradiction to what you tell us, viz. "That the most ancient of all societies, and the only natural one, is that of a family". If this society is natural, how can Independence be our natural state?

From placing God at the head of every political Society, and from no other cause, it followed that there were as many Gods, as there were different People. . . Polytheism was the result of national divisions†. You forget, Sir, that in another place,
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* Soc. Comp. B. i. Ch. 2. † Ib. ‡ Ib. B. iv. Ch. 8.

you allotted *Polytheism* a very different origin: it sprung, said you, from this, that man imagined "every being animated, whose action he felt". It was therefore an ignorance of natural Philosophy, and not Policy, that brought forth *Polytheism*. Moreover the Fact is contrary to history. After the Nations were divided, they still acknowledged the Only true God: and it doth not follow, that a Plurality of Gods is to be acknowledged, because God is placed at the head of each Political Society.

The fancy of the Greeks, in imagining that they could trace their Gods among the Barbarians, proceeded from another fancy they had, to consider themselves as the natural Sovereigns of those people†. Here, in a few words, are two new suppositions. The Greeks never imagined that they traced their Gods among the Persians, but they traced them among the Romans, over whom they never considered themselves as Sovereigns.

But it is a ridiculous piece of Erudition that reigns now-a-days, and which tends to prove the Identity of the Gods of different nations, as if Moloch, Saturn, and Chronos could be the same God; as if the Baal of the Phenicians, the Zeus of the Greeks, and the Jupiter of the Latins, could be the same; as if there could be any thing common among chimerical Beings bearing different names‡. You are mistaken, Sir, these names are not different; Moloch, Baal, Zeus, Jupiter, all of them signify the Sovereign Being, the Supreme Being, as God doth amongst us; consequently in their origin,

• Emil. T. iii. p. 316. † Ib. ‡ Ib. B. iv. ch. 8.

gin, they do not point out a Chimerical Being. *Saturn* and *Chronos* are one and the same name; both of them signify *Time*, which the imagination of the Poets made a Person of. You ought not to run down any kind of Erudition, because you have not applied yourself to it, nor understand any thing about it; that is treating Erudition just as you have treated Politicks and the true Religion.

*If it be asked how it happened that there were no Religious wars among the Pagans? I answer, that the Gods of the Pagans were not jealous Gods.** It becometh the true God alone to be so. You would have expressed yourself as properly, if you had said, that "the Pagans were not very jealous of their Gods."

Even Moses, and the Hebrew people sometimes entertained the same idea in speaking of the God of Israel. Are not those things, which thy God Chamos possesseth, said Jephthe to the Ammonites, due to thee by right? But what the Lord our God hath obtained by conquest, shall be our possession†. Nonne ea, quæ possidet Chamos, Deus tuus, tibi jure debentur? It is clear that this argument of *Jephthe* is an argument on supposition; or, as it is commonly called, an argument *ad hominem*. All the Interpreters have understood it in that sense. So far from putting the God of *Israel*, and the Gods of other nations on a level, the *Hebrews* always considered these latter as vain Idols; and thus *Chamos* and *Moloch* are called§.

But

* Soc. Comp. B. iv. Ch. 8.

† Judges xi. 24.

§ 3 Kings xi. 7.

But when the Jews, being subjected to the Kings of Babylon, and afterwards to the Kings of Syria, were determined obstinately to refuse acknowledging any other God than their own, this refusal, being considered as an act of Rebellion against their Conqueror, drew on them the persecutions we read of in their history, and of which no other example is to be met with, before the establishment of Christianity.* You treat history, Sir, in a very inaccurate manner. When the Jews were led into captivity by the Kings of *Assyria*, they underwent only a few particular and passing persecutions on account of their Religion, and were, in general, pretty much at their ease. On the other hand, when *Cambyfes* had conquered *Egypt*, he destroyed, as far as was in his power, the monuments of the *Egyptian* Religion. There was therefore never any thing constant and uniform, in this respect, in the Policy of Kings and Conquerors.

The obligation of changing the mode of worship, being a law to the vanquished, it was necessary to conquer first, before that was mentioned. You suppose this obligation without any grounds. When the Romans conquered the *Carthaginians* and *Gauls*, they did not oblige them to change their mode of worship.

At length when the Romans had extended their Empire, their Worship, and their Gods, Paganism became all over the known world, one and the same Religion†.

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* Soc. Comp. B. iv. Ch. 8. † Ib. ‡ Ib.

All this again is belied by History. First, the *Romans* were never zealous about extending their worship, or their Gods, since, as you acknowledge, they adopted those of the nations they vanquished. And it is certain the *Gauls*, the *Iberians*, the *Britons*, and several other nations, preserved their own Religion for a long time after they had been conquered. Secondly, never was *Paganism*. "one and the same Religion;" each People formed to themselves Gods, and ceremonies according to their own ideas; I appeal to the testimony of *Cicero**.

Things were in this state when Jesus Christ came to establish on earth a spiritual kingdom . . . which occasioned those intestine divisions, which have never ceased to agitate the Christian nations†. Jesus Christ recommended no one thing, in more express terms, than obedience to *Cesar*; how then can his Religion destroy the unity of the State, and cause intestine divisions? This, as yet, is only a slight mark of your hatred of the Christian Religion; and you will soon give the lie to this accusation.

But this new idea of a kingdom of the other world never being able to enter the heads of the Heathens, they always looked on the Christians as actual rebels . . . This was the cause of the Persecutions‡. *Tacitus* doth not attribute the first Persecution raised against the Christians, under *Nero*, to this cause: and above thirty years after, *Pliny* the younger acknowledged that he could make nothing

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of

* De Nat. Deorum. † Soc. Comp. B. iv. Ch. 8. ‡ Ib.

of the proceedings against them. Neither the Emperors, nor the *Roman* Magistrates had any knowledge of what *Jesus Christ* had said of his spiritual kingdom; nor is the accusation of Rebellion or Sedition found in any of the verbal Processes or Indictments drawn up against the Martyrs; they are only accused of disobeying the laws of the Emperors regarding Religion. You give us therefore nothing, but the whims of your own imagination.

What the Heathens apprehended, came to pass. Then the face of things was changed; the humble Christians changed their language: and very soon this pretended kingdom of another world was seen to become, under a visible head, the most absolute Despotism in this. It was, Sir, a great misfortune for Heathenism, that you did not live in the time of the Persecutions. You would have made the Emperors more sensible of what they had to dread from Christianity; you would have redoubled their zeal and their fury against that Religion: perhaps, in spite of the promises of *Jesus Christ*, you would have flattered yourself, that you could have hindered the establishment thereof, and would have kept up *Idolatry* for the greater good of mankind.*

You calumniate the Christians, when you accuse them of having changed their conduct and language. With strength enough to have made the whole Empire shake by the end of the second Century, they continued in the same subjection: and after the conversion of *Constantin*, there was no change either in their belief, or rules of morality.

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* Soc. Comp. B. iv. Ch. 8.

A Prince, however, and laws of Government still subsisted; and from this two-fold power there resulted a perpetual conflict about Jurisdiction, which hath rendered a perfect system of Policy impracticable in Christian States; and people never could determine which they were to obey, the Sovereign, or the Priest.*

The rule is clearly fixed in the Gospel: it orders us to give to Cesar, what belongs to Cesar, and to God, what belongs to God. If there have been sometimes disputes between the secular and ecclesiastical powers, they have arisen more from the passions and imprudence of individuals, than from any incompatibility between the respective laws. Notwithstanding this inconvenience (if it be one) the Christian States are better governed than any others: the Sovereigns are better obeyed; their crown better secured to them; and their subjects more at ease, and happier than under any other Government either ancient or modern, of which we have any account. Experience therefore and Facts equally depose against your prejudices.

Mahomet had very salutary views; he connected his political system well together†. It is nothing new to see you prefer Mahomet to Jesus Christ. It was something very wonderful to be sure, to introduce Uniformity into a Government absolutely despotic, with an equal sway over mind and body. It was a refined piece of policy to say to every one:

“Think, believe, act as I do in every thing, or I

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“cut

* Soc. Comp. B. iv. Ch. 8. † Ib.

"cut you to pieces." A Bear or a Lion, could they speak, would have said as much.

Among us the Kings of England have set up for Heads of the Church, the Czars have done the same: but by assuming this title, they have made themselves less Masters than Ministers thereof. It is not surprising, that (as Policy is your only motive for having any Religion, and knowing no other rule of faith, but the will of the Prince) the power of the Kings of England, and that of the Czars, should appear to you too much limited. But is it not somewhat singular, that you, who on every occasion are crying out against Despotism, should be for establishing it in the article of Religion, where it ought least of all to be admitted?

Of all Christian writers the Philosopher Hobbes is the only one, who thoroughly saw the evil and the remedy. . . . It is not so much what is horrible and false in his Politics, that hath rendered them odious, as what is just and true. Hobbes indeed is a fine model to copy after and to cite! If there be any thing horrible and false in his system, there is much more so in yours, which is built on the same foundation, and carries a hatred of all Religion farther than he did.

The opposite sentiments of Bayle and Warburton might be easily refuted. It might be proved against the former, that no state was ever founded, but on the basis of Religion; and against the second, that the Christian law is, at the bottom, more hurtful than useful to the strength of a State. You however

ever do not found the State on the basis of Religion; on the contrary, you would have Religion ply to the laws of the State, and to borrow from them its authority, instead of communicating any to them. This system therefore is the most favourable of all to *Bayle*.

We shall see how you disfigure Christianity, in order to prove the second proposition, which you here advance.

*Religion . . . may be distinguished into two kinds, that of Man, and that of the Citizen**. A most ridiculous distinction! God formed Man for a Citizen. God therefore never will oblige Man to pay him a worship incompatible with the duties of a citizen. Every Religion, which is not fit for a citizen, is not fit for man.

The first (Religion) destitute of temples, altars, or rites, confined barely to an inward worship of the supreme God, and the eternal duties of morality, is the pure and simple Religion of the Gospel, true Theism, what may be called the Divine Natural Law†.

You probably supposed, Sir, that your Readers would have no knowledge of the Gospel, while you maintain that it teaches us no other Religion, but the *Divine Natural Law*, or *Deism*, for things ought to be called by their names. But it was incumbent on you at least to have proved, that it prescribes a worship destitute of Temples, Altars, Rites, or any exterior Practices; we should then

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have

* Soc. Comp. B. iv. Ch. 8. † Ib.

have yielded you the glory of having understood it better, than either the Apostles, or their disciples. They prescribed Prayers, a Sacrifice, Sacraments, they themselves appointed the form of them: and I have shewn you, that a barely inward worship was not fit for man, neither could it subsist. But there are very good reasons for preaching up this barely inward worship: by that means the troublesome yoke of a public Religion is shaken off: and this is what is aimed at.

*The other (Religion) confined to one country alone, allots to itself its own Gods, its peculiar and tutelar Patrons. It hath its Dogmas, its Rites, its Exterior worship prescribed by the laws. Out of that single nation, which follows that Religion, all with respect to it, are Unbelievers, Barbarians, Strangers; she extends the duties and laws of man no farther than her own altars.** All this is easily perceived to be no more than a picture drawn by the imagination, a mere fancy-piece; but we must see where it will end. *Such, say you, were all the Religions of the first People†.* I have shewn you the contrary; the *Greeks* never considered the *Egyptians* as barbarians, though these latter had a Religion different from the former: the *Romans*, in their turn, never treated the *Greeks* as barbarians, tho' they had each of them different tutelar Gods, and some particular ceremonies.

There is a third kind of Religion still more whimsical, which, appointing for men two Legislatures, two Heads,

* Soc. Comp. B. iv. Ch. 8. † Ib.

*Heads, two Countries, subjects them to contradictory duties . . . such is the Romish Christianity**. Here are several remarks to be made. In the first place, these pretended contradictory duties, are what *Jesus Christ* himself prescribed, when he said: *Give to Cesar what belongs to Cesar, and to God what belongs to God*. It is therefore of the Christian Religion, such as it was preached by *Jesus Christ*, that we are told, that it “dissolves social union, and “sets man in contradiction with himself.” Secondly, it was *Jesus Christ* himself, who, when he established on earth a spiritual kingdom, “gave “mankind two Countries, two Heads, two Legislatures;” so that it is the very Religion of *Jesus Christ* which is here declared to be “worth nothing “at all; to be so evidently bad, that it would be “loss of time to think of demonstrating how bad it is.” Thirdly, it is clearly seen in the Gospel, that *Jesus Christ* spoke of this kingdom, which is not of this world, and that he appointed two Legislatures; where therefore are we to look for this “pure and simple Religion,” this “true Theism,” which is called the “Religion of Man, and of the “Gospel?” Is there any difference between the Religion of the Gospel, and that which *Jesus Christ* preached? Never could any one conceive, that in the same book, in the same chapter, a writer could bring together such contradictory ideas!

The second is so far good, as it unites the divine Worship with a love of the Laws. It is false, Sir, that

* Soc. Comp. B. iv. Ch. 8.

that the Religion of the first people, for instance the *Greeks* and the *Romans*, united the divine Worship with a love of the Laws. They practised indeed the divine Worship, such as it was prescribed by the Laws, or rather by Custom; but they did not observe the Laws, because Religion commanded it. Thus Religion borrowed all its authority from the Laws, and the Laws received none from Religion. You know very well, that Heathen Morality had no relation to Religion. It is the Gospel that hath made obedience to the Laws a duty of Religion, and which enjoins moral virtues, as pleasing to God: and it is for that reason, that Christianity is of all Religions the most conducive to the happiness and tranquillity of the State.

It is a species of Theocracy, in which there ought to be no other Pontiff than the Prince, nor other Priests, than the Magistrates. This however is what was never practised among any people, neither among the *Egyptians*, *Greeks*, or *Romans*. When the Pontiffs had acquired a certain authority, the Emperors united to their dignity that of Sovereign Pontiff; but they never meddled with the inferior Priesthood.

But it is bad, in as much, as being founded in error and falsehood, it deceives men, renders them credulous and superstitious, and drowns the true Worship of the Deity in a vain Ceremonial. . . it renders a people sanguinary, intolerant, &c.

You have not allowed us time to forget, that you here speak of all national Religions in general, and consequently of *Christianity*, in as much as it is a national

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tional Religion ; thus *Protestantism* itself is involved in the same condemnation. It " is founded in " error, and falsehood," as much as *Judaism*, *Mahometism*, and *Paganism*. It " renders man sanguinary," although you have said in another place, that " Christianity softens the manners, and " renders Governments less sanguinary." But it would be no small piece of work, were we to reckon all your contradictions.

There remains therefore the Religion of Man, or Christianity, not such as it is professed now a-days, but that of the Gospel, which is quite different. You would have spoken more clearly, if you had said, (according to your principles) that the Religion of nature alone, was the Religion of man ; for, according to you, it is the only one that is proper for man. Now it is a mere jest, to call natural Religion the Religion of the Gospel : the Gospel, it is true, teaches, in the most clear and express manner, all the duties of natural Religion, as it is also true, that they never could be well learned elsewhere. But it prescribes also other duties, which you are not fond of.

But as this Religion hath no particular relation to the body politic, it leaves no other force to the Laws, than what they draw from themselves, without adding any to them ; and, by that means, one of the firmest bands of private society is without effect. But what is more ; so far from attaching the hearts of the citizens to the State, it detaches them therefrom, as well as from all other worldly objects : I know nothing more contrary to the spirit of society.

Such

Such is the conclusion we ought to have expected long since. "The Religion of the Priests is good for nothing; it imposes contradictory duties;" a national, social, civil, politic Religion, or whatever you please to call it, "is good for nothing at all; it is founded in error and falsehood;" the Religion of Man, or natural Religion is no better: "it detaches the hearts of the citizens from the State; it is contrary to the spirit of society:" the best is therefore to have none at all.

We are extremely obliged to you, Sir, for having spoken out so plainly: we perfectly understand at last, if not the design, at least the effect of all your instructions. It is, to take away from man the only Religion, which can make good citizens, to give him one, which, by your own confession, "hath no particular relation to the body politic, which detaches the hearts of the citizens from the State, which is contrary to the spirit of society."

From this important confession of yours we reason in this plain and simple manner: God made us men only to render us social or fit for society: now socialness is one of the essential attributes of humanity: therefore the Religion prescribed by him, is the most favourable to the spirit of society. But you own, that the purely natural Religion is not such: therefore the Religion you preach up, is not the Religion which God was pleased to give us. Yours may do very well for the *Orang-Outangs*, for the savages that dwell in woods, who live without society, or being united in one general interest; but it will not do for men.

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A society of true Christians would be no longer a society of men : that is to say, a society of Christians, such as you have imagined they should be, and such as Jesus Christ never thought of forming, would no longer be a society of men ; that is very true. And therefore we maintain, that you form to yourself a false idea of Christianity ; and that, to render it odious, you disfigure it ; we shall soon see the proof of this.

Christianity is a Religion wholly spiritual, entirely taken up with celestial objects ; the Christian's country is not of this world. Your reasoning, Sir, goes on mere equivocations. You would express yourself much better, did you say, that Christianity so employs us in worldly objects, as not to lose sight of those that are celestial. It enjoins us to fulfil all the duties of civil society : and to fulfil them exactly, we must be employed about worldly objects : to act with indifference with regard to the success, would be to act negligently. The Gospel never forbid " wishing for the Prosperity of " the State, or rejoicing thereat ;" we ought to consider it as a blessing of God, for which we ought to thank him. St Paul orders us to pray for that end, and the Church doth it every day. If therefore a Christian hath it in his power to hinder the decline of the state, he is obliged in conscience to do it, and even sacrifice himself for the public good. You give us a mere fancy-piece for the picture of Christianity.

We say that our true Country, our everlasting Country is Heaven ; but this sentiment doth not dis-

dispense with the affection we ought to have for that on earth : never was a bad subject, or a bad citizen, a good Christian

If there should be among Christians a single man of Ambition, or a single Hypocrite, he will make an easy prey of his pious Countrymen. If those, who are in office, do their duty, they will watch that no ambitious man ever usurps authority. Christian Charity never forbad taking proper measures against factious and seditious citizens ; it prefers the public good to private interest. God doth not command us to respect an usurped authority, while a lawful power subsists in the State ; it doth not forbid punishing an Usurper. To drive him out, is not to disturb the public peace, on the contrary it is to secure it ; and Christian Meekness is not contrary to Justice.

Doth a foreign war happen ? The citizens march to battle without reluctance ; they do their duty, but without any passion for victory. Fresh suppositions again ! A military man attached to his duty from principles of Religion, will be watchful, active, laborious, brave, apply to his profession, and in the time of action neglect nothing, that may contribute to Victory. It ought to be wished for as a public good, and the safety of the Citizens ; it is not to be expected from Providence, but by doing all that can be done by human power, to procure it. Christian Soldiers are neither *Stoics* nor Statues, they are intrepid from principle, and determined to conquer or die.

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In my way of thinking, the oath taken by Fabius's Soldiers, was a fine oath. They did not swear that they would conquer or die; but they swore they would return Conquerors, and they kept their word. Christians never would have taken such an oath; they would have thought that it were tempting God.* The oath taken by the Soldiers of Fabius would never have procured them the victory, if it could not have been procured by human means. Christian Soldiers might even take the same, with this condition understood, *if it be the will of God.*

Christianity preaches up nothing but slavery and dependence. The spirit of it is too favourable to Tyranny, for the latter not to make its advantage of it on every occasion. True Christians are formed for slaves†. Christianity preaches dependence, but it is false to say that it preaches slavery: to confound the latter with lawful obedience, is the language of sedition: wherever Christianity prevails, slavery hath been abolished. So far is its spirit from being favourable to Tyranny, that no Governments are less tyrannical, than those of the Christian powers; and you yourself have acknowledged, that this Religion hath softened both manners and Governments. Your own confession; and experience, (which is the best master in what concerns Politics) depose equally against your Principles.

The Christian troops, we are told, are excellent: I deny it: I know no Christian troops†. There is nothing surprising in that. As you set out with figuring to yourself Christianity, according to your particular ideas, such as it never was, or ever will

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* Soc. Comp. B. iv. Ch. 8. † Ib. † Ib.

be, and contrary to the very spirit of the Gospel, you will no where find any Christians at all. But is it not something very particular, that for seventeen hundred years, that Christianity hath been established, it never should have been as yet known, and that it was necessary to wait for you to tell us what it was?

You must give me leave, Sir, to oppose to you again, what M. *de Montesquieu* hath said of *Bayle*, who made the same assertion you have done. "Monsieur *Bayle*, after having insulted all Religions, casts a slur on the Christian Religion: he hath the boldness to advance, that true Christians can never form a state to subsist any time. Why not? They would be citizens, who perfectly knew their duty, and would have the greatest zeal to comply with it. They would be perfectly sensible of the rights of natural defence; the more they believed they owed to Religion, the more they would think they owed to their country. The principles of Christianity, deeply imprinted in the heart, would be infinitely more powerful, than the false Honour of Monarchies, the Human Virtues of Republics, or the slavish Fear of Despotic States. It is astonishing that this great man could not distinguish between the orders for the establishment of Christianity, and Christianity itself, and that one may impute to him an ignorance of the spirit of his own Religion." It is a pity, Sir, that by following *Bayle's* example, you have given occasion to the same reproach.

What you say of the *Crusades* is unintelligible;
Those

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Those who took the Cross, fought to drive the Infidels out of the Holy Land, and to render (what was then a common devotion) Pilgrimages there-to more safe and easy, and for no other end.

Under the Heathen Emperors the Christian Soldiers were brave; all the Christian writers tell us so, and I believe it; it was an emulation of honour against the Pagan troops. As soon as the Emperors became Christians, that emulation ceased; and when the Cross had banished the Eagle, all the Roman valour disappeared.* You might have added, that the Heathen writers never denied the bravery of the Christian soldiers, and they never would have failed to do it, if there had been any room for it. It is mere prejudice and injustice to attribute the diminution of the Roman valour to the establishment of Christianity. One may see in *Ammianus Marcellinus*, whether it was the same under *Julian*, though a Heathen, as it had been under *Julius Cæsar*. It was luxury, and not Religion, that weakened military discipline, and enervated the soldier. Have we not seen, even in Christian States, the same vicissitudes in discipline and the valour of armies, without it being possible to attribute this change to Religion?

Subjects are not accountable to the Sovereigns for their opinions, any farther than these opinions may interest the community†. According to your principles, there are no particular opinions in matters of Religion, but what do interest the community. It is of great importance to know, whether a subject

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* Soc. Comp. B. iv. Ch. 8. † Ib.

professes the national Religion, or whether he confines himself to that of man; because "the former
 "strongly attaches the hearts of the citizens to the
 "State, whereas the second detaches them from
 "it, and gives them a spirit contrary to the spirit
 "of society;" this you have owned.

Moreover, every man, who hath a system of his own, doth not content himself with barely believing it; he will talk, dogmatize, write, blame, decry all those, who may be against him, form adherents, and cabals; this is the history of all the sectaries. A man who pretends to think only for himself, is devoured with a secret desire of getting others to adopt his ideas, and furiously tears to pieces all who are capable of exposing his errors. The Government knows but too well, from experience, that rebellion against the civil establishment is a necessary consequence of the hatred of the Religion of the State*; that the enemies of the latter will

* This may be but too true with regard to *France*: but happily cannot, on any grounds, be turned against the Roman Catholics in *England*, who, abating the short-lived disturbance in the North under the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, never took up arms, though the Religion, which their ancestors had professed for nine hundred years, and in which they had been bred and born, was overthrown in the manner, and from motives mentioned by most of our historians. Neither have they since ever caused any disturbances, as a body of men, under any of the alterations or changes that have happened in Religion or Government. They have ever prayed even for those Princes, under whom the penal laws were let loose against them, and acknowledge, with the greatest gratitude to God and their temporal Superiors, the mildness of the present Government. *The Translator.*

will suffer neither curb nor master; that every bad Christian must necessarily be still a worse subject.

*There is therefore a Profession of Faith purely civil, the articles of which it appertains to the Sovereign to fix . . . without having it in his power to oblige any one to believe them, he may banish from the State every one, who doth not believe them**. Without examining the truth or falsehood of this principle, it appears to me, that the consequences, which result from thence, are no way favourable to you. The civil Profession of Faith in *France*, is the Catholic Religion with all its Dogmas, Morality, and Discipline; the Sovereign hath sworn at his coronation to maintain it in all his dominions; he may therefore banish whoever doth not believe it, and the Magistrates, invested with his authority, are neither unjust, nor incompetent, when they proceed thus according to law. If they can treat the natives in this manner, they may with more reason treat strangers with severity, who refuse to submit to this Police.

And if any one, after having publicly acknowledged these same Dogmas, should behave, as if he did not believe them, let him be punished with death; he hath committed the greatest of crimes, he hath lied in the face of the Law†. How many are deserving of death, according to this decision! They live in outward appearance like the rest of the nation; they observe some of the public duties of Religion; but in the mean time they poison Society by detestable publications, which are privately printed here, or brought from foreign parts.

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* Soc. Comp. B. iv. Ch. 8. † Ib.

To screen themselves from the prosecution of the Police, they disavow them: is not this lying in the face of the Laws?

The Dogmas of civil or political Religion ought to be few in number . . . the existence of the Deity, &c. With regard to negative Dogmas, I confine myself to one, that is, Intolerance. See, Sir, the perpetual inconsequences of your system. You would have no other Civil Religion, but the Religion of nature; though this latter, by your own confession, least of all deserves to be called a Civil Religion: "It hath no particular relation to the body Politic; "it gives no new strength to the laws; it detaches the hearts of the citizens from the State; "it is contrary to the spirit of Society." You establish, as one of the fundamental Dogmas of this Religion; the Sanctity of social Compact and of the Laws: would you please to tell us, on what you ground this Sanctity of the Laws, and what Sanction you have for them? The moment I believe not in God, farther than the Government pleases, is it clearly proved, that God will punish me for not obeying the Laws? You yourself suppose that there is no obligation of obeying any law, which appears to you unjust, for instance, the law that enjoins the profession of the Catholic Religion in France; for the same reason, every miscreant, who sets out with persuading himself that such a law of the State is unjust, can he believe himself obliged to obey it? Thus then the Laws are reduced to a barely coercive force; and every Hypocrite, who is cunning enough to screen himself from temporal punishment

punishment, may be a Villain with impunity. Such is the holy Religion, which you have drawn from the Gospel!

Such as make a distinction between Civil and Theological Intolerance, in my opinion, are deceived: these two kinds of Intolerance are inseparable. It is impossible to live in peace with those we believe damned. Now, as the Gentlemen, who preach up Deism and natural Religion, look upon us all damned, as so many Forgerers and Hypocrites, it is impossible they should ever live in peace with us; one of these two things must be done, either they must exterminate us, or they must be exterminated themselves. This is a fine way indeed for people to bring us over to Toleration, by telling us that they can never think of tolerating us.*

Wherever Theological Intolerance is admitted, it is impossible but it should have some civil effect; and wherever it hath any, the Sovereign is no longer Sovereign, even in temporals; that is to say, the Sovereign is no longer a Despot; you are there in the right. But will you undertake to prove, that it is an evil, when the Prince is not so? You, on every occasion, are claiming the rights of human nature against the Despotism of Princes; where is there a more powerful curb to this abuse of power, than Religion and the authority of the Church? Montesquieu, whose talents you esteem, agreeing with you in principle, acknowledges that the blows given, at different times, to the different Jurisdictions, are so many steps towards despotism: consequently he is far from representing the Ecclesiastical

* Soc. Comp. B. iv. Ch. 8.

fiastical power as dangerous or pernicious to the good of the State.

Could any one have persuaded himself, Sir, that you would become the Apologist, and the Apostle of Despotism ! You are for having the Sovereign carry it so far, as to rule over our understanding and our hearts ; so far as to impose on us, whatever Religion he pleases ; so far, as to exercise over us an Empire that belongs to God alone. Scarce do the Turks themselves carry it so far. How therefore is this contradiction to be unraveled ? It is thus. Let us have no longer any public Religion to plague us, and all is well.

To prove your assertion with regard to the pretended Sovereignty of Priests, you cite, in a note, the right the Clergy have usurped, according to you, of alone passing the Contract of Marriage. It is evidently false, that the Clergy alone regulate Marriage, or that they have usurped this right. A Contract of such consequence demands equally the attention of the two Powers, and the equal concurrence of their authority. Were it not for the Laws, which they have in concert made, respecting this article, Marriage would become Lewdness and Prostitution. The Clergy can never abuse their power, as they cannot enforce laws of mere discipline, but with the good will and authority of the Sovereign. Was not this authority necessary to receive the most salutary regulations of the Council of *Trent* ?

If, in the different disputes which have happened between the two Powers, the Clergy have gene-

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generally obtained what they demanded, it was because they had justice and reason on their side; it was only to the strength of these, that Government yielded. In spite of the reiterated declamations of pretended Sages, the Church always hath been, and ever will be the strongest support of the Throne.

Whoever dare say, OUT OF THE CHURCH, NO SALVATION, ought to be banished the State . . . The reason that Henry the IV. is said to have had for embracing the Romish Religion, ought to engage every honest man to quit it, and especially every Prince, that knows how to reason. I have shewn you, Sir, that Jesus Christ himself, and his Apostles were bold enough to say: OUT OF THE CHURCH, NO SALVATION; so that your decision recoils upon them. Let us express ourselves better; it recoils only on yourself. No one can see, without indignation, that, while you send us to the Gospel, you dare condemn, as pernicious, the very doctrine it teaches us.

You will give us leave, Sir, to tell you, that Henry the IV. reasoned better than you do: his way of reasoning made him a great man, and a great King. Happy would those be, who blame him, if they could think as sensibly as he did!

I am far, Sir, from having taken notice of every thing reprehensible in this chapter; but I think I have said enough to shew, that there is neither order, connection, or justness in your ideas; that you every where lay down principles and consequences, which contradict one another; that before

fore you undertook to write on such important subjects, as those of Religion and Politics, you ought to have meditated longer on them, and not have suffered yourself to have been dazzled with the first glimmerings of probability, and to have withstood a little oftener the temptation of blaming and reforming.

I am, Sir, &c.

END of the NINTH LETTER.

LET.



L E T T E R X.

On Monsieur Rousseau's Apology.

NOTHING, Sir, is less agreeable, or of less use, than the discussion I have still to finish with you. Since your opinions are false and pernicious, as I think I have demonstrated, it is of little concern to know, if you have violated the laws and decency by defending them. To shew this, we must go back to personal facts, which I should be glad not to touch on. But as you, under pretence of justifying yourself, have treated both the Magistracy and the Clergy without the least respect; while I examine your Apology, I am forced to undertake theirs, and to shew you, that you are as unjust in your attack, as you are weak and ill-grounded in your defence.

Let us begin with your *Profession of Faith*: it was already known by that of the Savoyard Curate, which you either composed, or published, which ever you please. You have again clapped thereto the seal of your approbation, by declaring, that *you will ever esteem it as the best and most useful*
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performance of the age in which you published it*. It would be wrong not to respect so authentic a sanction, and to disturb you in the esteem, with which you are penetrated for your own productions.

I am a Christian, a sincere Christian, according to the doctrine of the Gospel. You ought to have said, according to one part of the Doctrine of the Gospel, since you maintain that the Gospel is full of things incredible, of things that are repugnant to reason, and which it is impossible for any man of sense to conceive or admit†. You do not therefore admit of all the Gospel. Your Christianity is not of a very uneasy kind; Jews, Mahometans, and Idolaters are as much Christians as you are; there is not one of them who would not consent to receive the Gospel, provided he were allowed to reject or retain of it what he pleased.

I am a Christian, not as a Disciple of Priests, but as a Disciple of Jesus Christ. A very docile Disciple indeed he must be, who can tell his Master, “that he teaches things repugnant to reason: that he would sooner believe in Magic, than acknowledge the voice of God in such lessons: that his brain was turned, &c.” Do you sport with language? Or do you suppose your readers so stupid, as not to contrast your feigned demonstrations of respect, with the bloody outrageous manner in which you treat him. I spare you here, Sir, and will not draw an odious parallel; my design is, not to hurt you,

* Let. p. 56. † Emil. T. iii. p. 165. Let. p. 113.

you, but to represent to you, how contradictory your sentiments are.

“ You are not a Disciple of Priests ;” but whoever is not, neither is he a Disciple of *Jesus Christ*. It was to Priests *Jesus Christ* gave a commission to teach his doctrine ; and you never will receive it with certainty through any other channel. It was to them that *Jesus Christ* said in the person of his Apostles : *Go, teach all nations . . . behold I am with you all days even to the end of the world**. The Apostles were not to teach in person to the end of the world, but by their successors. He said to them again : *He who heareth you, heareth me ; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me†*.

I remain inviolably attached to the Religion of my Fore-fathers. You impose on us, Sir ; your Religion is not that of your Fore-fathers. Your Fore-fathers were *Calvinists*, and you are more than a *Socinian†*. Your Fore-fathers believed mysteries, at least they made a profession of doing so, and you believe none ; they did not doubt of Revelation, and you doubt of it. Your Fore-fathers, bold as they were, never advanced that “ the Gospel was full of things repugnant to reason ;” they never advised the Worship of *Mahomet* ; they never placed that false Prophet side by side with *Moses* and *Jesus Christ*, and on the same line ; they never said that the “ brain of *Jesus Christ* was turned.” If your Fore-fathers were alive, they would

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* Matt. xxviii. 19. † Luke x. 16. ‡ To maintain that we ought to confine ourselves to natural Religion, is to teach *Deism*..

be as much scandalized at your opinions, as we are ; they would treat you like *Servetus*, whose sentiments you follow, and even go beyond.

Like them, I take scripture and reason for the only rule of my belief. According to you however, "we ought not to have recourse to books," nor consequently to the scripture*. Your fore-fathers had not the same rule of belief, as you have. They would indeed admit of no rule, but *scripture alone* ; but they never taught, that the sense of it was to be determined by the lights of *reason alone*, or that it was *impossible for a man of sense to admit what he could not conceive in the Gospel*. It is true, that you reason more justly than they did ; you carry their principle, as far as it will go ; you demonstrate the consequences, which were objected to them, and which they would not see : but after all you do not believe as they did.

According to your principles, Scripture and Reason cannot agree, since "the scripture contains things repugnant to Reason." If Reason be to judge of what we are to admit, or not admit, in Scripture, Reason alone becomes the Rule ; the Scripture is no longer any thing more than another book. As you explain it, the Scripture is not so much your Rule of Faith, as the *Library of the Polish Brethren* ; it was from thence you drew a part of your system of Religion.

Like them, I except against human authority. Your Fore-fathers came very badly off by excepting against what you call *human authority*,
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* Let p. 75.

and which in reality is the authority of God. No sooner had they broken this so necessary a curb to human reason, than they no longer went on in any certain road: each one became the arbiter of his own Faith, and the artificer of his own Religion; you shew us the condition to which it is reduced at present among their children.

When injurious Priests arrogate to themselves an authority, which they have not, and take upon them to dictate to me what I am to believe, and insolently bid me to retract, to disguise my sentiments, to explain this, to disown that, their arrogance shall never impose on me.* Where have you found any Priests, who bid you disguise your sentiments? Is it to be suffered, that you should impute to them such unbecoming behaviour? You, who are perpetually calling on Charity, Humanity, Justice; you, who give Lessons to others, with so much eloquence, on these virtues, have you forgot the laws of them? Is it by calumnies that a man deserves the title of a *Friend to Truth and Virtue*, which you so falsely arrogate to yourself?

If they want to cut me off from the Church, I shall have little fear of their threats, which they have it not in their power to execute. No, Sir, they will cut you off no more from the Church; you have cut off yourself long since; or rather you never were a member of it.

It is my most ardent, and most sincere wish, to have Jesus Christ himself the Arbiter and Judge be-

* Let. p. 58.

*tween them and me**. Do you reflect, Sir, after what manner you have treated this awful Judge? But he pardoned those who crucified him, and blasphemed against him; several of them were converted: may you also, after having imitated their crimes, imitate their repentance!

But whether I ought to have kept my sentiments on these matters to myself (as they never cease telling me); or whether (when I had the courage to publish them under my own name) I attacked the laws, and disturbed the public peace of society, is what I shall examine by and by†. You, however, did not think proper to keep your word, and you had your reasons for it. In order to your full and entire justification, this important Question ought to have been discussed: What right had you, Sir, a Foreigner, without Mission, without Character, to teach, and publish *Deism* in France, in defiance of the Laws of the Kingdom, both Ecclesiastical and Civil? Though you had succeeded in proving this privilege, that would not have been enough. It was moreover necessary for you to shew clearly, how such behaviour could be reconciled with what you have said: *I do not think that any one can lawfully introduce a new Religion into a Country, without the permission of the Sovereign; for if it be not directly disobeying God, it is disobeying the Laws; and whoever disobeys the laws, disobeys God*‡. That *Deism* is a new Religion in France, you do not call in question; how therefore did not you disobey the Laws and God,

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* Let. p. 59.

† Ib. p. 66.

‡ Ib. p. 86.

by endeavouring to introduce it? Either clear up this mystery, or shew us the letters patent, which you had from the Sovereign.

*Moreover the national forms ought to be observed, add you again; it is what I have very much insisted on**. The national Form in France is the Catholic Religion together with its Dogmas, its Morality, its Discipline; did you observe it during your long stay at Paris? While you recommend to others such prudent behaviour, you thought proper to dispense with yourself from practising it.

Once more, Sir, two words by way of Apology on this head, would not have been misplaced in a letter, which contains so much of what was nothing to the purpose. You would, by that means, have confounded the Archbishop of Paris, who censured you, and the Parliament, which ordered your person to be seized; you would have re-established your reputation blasted by an Arrêt; you would have justified your friends, and all such as copy after you; this would have been more to the purpose than declamations and invectives against the Priests. You have proved at full length, that you are not a Hypocrite; that may be: but the main point was to prove, that you were not guilty of sedition.

Nevertheless, after having bet about the bush for the space of thirty pages, you repeat the accusation brought against you, and this is the whole of your answer. *I say as much to those, who accuse*

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* Let. p. 78.

me of having said what ought not to have been said, and of endeavouring to disturb the public peace. A vague and rash imputation, with which those, who have reflected the least on what is useful and what is hurtful, by a single word, set the credulous public against a well-meaning author. Your intentions are undoubtedly excellent; but your conduct is detestable.*

Is it disturbing the public peace, to send every one back to the laws of his own country? You send others thither, while you reserve to yourself the privilege of being exempt from any subjection to them. So far from obeying the Civil and Ecclesiastical laws of France, while you were there, you never ceased speaking and writing against both. This is the whole of your justification.

As you find your talents fitter for an attack, than a defence, you return to the charge. Let those, who accuse me of a want of Religion, because they cannot conceive how a person can have any, agree at least, if they can among themselves. Some find in my books nothing, but a system of Atheism; others say, that I give glory to God in my books, without believing in him from the bottom of my heart. They tax my writings with Impiety, and my sentiments with Hypocrisy. But if I publicly preach up Atheism, it follows, that I am not a Hypocrite; and if I affect a Faith which I have not, it follows that I do not teach Impiety. While contradictory imputations are heaped one on another,
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* Let. p. 94.

the calumny discovers itself. But Malice is blind, and Passion never reasoneth.*

You ought to impute to yourself alone the contradictions found in the accusations brought against you. It is quite natural that contradictory principles and a contradictory system should inspire your readers with opposite ideas, according to the light they see them in. This contradiction of which you make a matter of triumph, is a mystery easily cleared up.

You undoubtedly have a Religion, you solemnly protest you have one; and I believe you. You believe a God, his Providence, the Spirituality and Immortality of the Soul, a Life to come. You pay homage to the sanctity of the morality of the Gospel, because your reason shews you the truth of all this. You even prove these essential truths with all the force and energy of your style; in this you give glory to God, and we bless your zeal.

But this Creed of yours includes nothing but the Religion of nature; the *Jews*, the *Mahometans*, the *Heathens*, will with pleasure acknowledge you for a brother, if you present the Gospel to them, only as a collection of Morality, like the Manual of *Epicletus*, although more perfect. Brought up as you were, in the principles of *Calvinism*, you have retained thereof, whatever was agreeable to your own ideas, and some terms of Religion, to which you affix a meaning after your own fashion. You call your belief, (which is no more than a system

* Let. p. 61.

system of Philosophy) a revealed Religion, a divine Religion, true Faith, pure Christianity, a true Worship of God. But, Sir, you make a wrong use of words, when you call that *Faith* and *Revelation*, which Reason demonstrates; you, by that means, make a Dictionary of your own, and form to yourself a Jargon unintelligible to the greatest part of your readers. Those who understand your meaning, are not edified by all this contrivance.

There is one remark to be made, viz. that your system is very near the actual Religion of many of the Protestant Switzers, especially of the men of letters among them*. It is Socinianism carried to the greatest length, from which you want to exculpate your brethren, but from which you ought to have begun by preserving yourself. It is the necessary consequence of the principle the Protestants set out with. This hath been long foretold them, and the Prophecy is but too exactly fulfilled. But let this be as it may, it is still a sort of hypocrisy, which does you no honour: to exculpate others from Socinianism, and then profess it yourself in their communion: this is not consistent: but that is yet only one of the smallest inconveniences.

The fundamental principle on which you have raised your system, is, that "We neither can, nor ought to believe any thing that is not demonstrated"

* See the Profession of Faith of the Ministers of Geneva, which follows the letter of M. Rousseau to M. d'Alembert; the writings of those of Neuf-Chatel against the doctrine of the Sieur Petit-Pierre; the Catechism in five Volumes octavo, printed at Neuve-Vill, in 1751, &c.

"ted to us." It is also the great argument of the *Deists*, *Materialists*, and *Atheists*: it is the basis of their opinions, as well as of yours. "We neither can, nor ought we to believe any thing that is not demonstrated." Now according to certain *Deists*, neither the Providence of God, nor a life to come, are demonstrated to us: we ought not therefore to believe them. The distinction between Spirit and Matter is not demonstrated, according to the Disciples of *Spinoza*; we may therefore dispense with ourselves from believing that there is any difference between them. The Existence of a God, saith an *Atheist*, is not sufficiently demonstrated; if there are proofs for it, there are also unanswerable difficulties in it: I ought not therefore to be obliged to believe it. Can these Gentlemen, whose company you have kept, seeing you agree with them in principle, persuade themselves that you do not equally agree with them in the consequences? If they thought otherwise, they must think that you do not know how to reason.

You do nothing but preach up Toleration in point of Religion; and it is a necessary consequence of your fine axiom: as no one ought to be obliged to believe what is not demonstrated to him, why should any one be harassed about the Existence of God, who protests on his conscience that it is not demonstrated to him? Now *Toleration*, or if you please, *Impunity*, is all that either *Atheists* or *Villains* demand. They never presented a request to have *Atheism* authorized by an Edict of the Sovereign, or that it should be enregistered in his Courts.

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Every blow you give Intolerance; every Investive you throw out against the Church, are so many acts of kindness done to the Libertines of every denomination; and they had long since said all that you have said. Will they imagine that you are against them, while you fight for them, and put arms into their hands? They are perfectly sensible in their own hearts, that *Toleration* is the same thing as *Indifference*, with regard to every species of Religion; and that this *Indifference* is a formal Annihilation of all Religion; they will therefore never suspect, that you were not equally sensible of it yourself.

You do still worse, Sir; for you never stop, till you can go no further. You claim a right of preaching aloud, in public and every where, what you think, nay you say that you are even obliged in conscience to do so; it is an *engagement*, say you, *that I was obliged to fulfil according to my talent*; and hereupon you cite a passage of St *Augustin*, where he says, that "truth strongly calls upon us all to join in publishing it," &c*. Thus you grant those that have no Religion, more than they ever durst presume to ask. If every one hath a right, and is under an obligation of preaching up, what he takes for the truth, an *Atheist* is legally authorized to preach up *Atheism*; because, according to him, it is the truth; and, according to you, *man-kind ought not to be instructed by halves*†. All the Miscreants, whose cause you plead with so much

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* Let. p. 69. † Ib.

ness, cannot but consider you as their Brother, and even as their Protector. You easily conceive, Sir, what sentiments so scandalous a brotherhood must inspire all good people with against you. This is the unravelment of all the contradictions, which you seem to be surpris'd at finding in the accusations brought against you.

It is scarce worth while giving an answer to the passage of St. *Augustin*. That holy Doctor certainly never expected being cited to prove that we must profess *Atheism*, if we thought it true. "We are to publish the truth;" but is a Visionary to publish whatever he pleases to take for the truth? "We are to preach the truth," when we are commissioned to do it, and this was St. *Augustin*'s case: but if every one is for mounting the pulpit, what absurd stuff shall we not be expos'd to hear? Thus should we be upon a footing with the *Quakers* in England.

But you grow peevish, and ridicule the maxim, which, you say, people are perpetually dinning in your ears on every side, viz: *That every truth ought not to be divulged* *. Sir, every maxim is true or false, according to the meaning we are dispos'd to give it. A wrong use is undoubtedly made of this, if any one conclude from thence, that therefore it is lawful to teach a falsehood. But you strangely make a still worse use of the maxim, which you oppose to it, since it is an Apology for all the Fanatics and Seditious in the universe.

To

* Let. p. 66.

To make you sensible how ridiculous your principles are, give me leave, for a moment, to act the odious part of an *Atheist*, by borrowing a style which I disapprove of; and vouchsafe to answer your own arguments.

“ You have shewn the Catholics, that *their belief is no more than outward shew; that their manners are like their faith**; that an appearance of Religion, only serves to dispense with them from having any. To prove this, you charitably have imputed to them every vice, you have reproached them with these vices in a most eloquent manner, from whence you have concluded, like a good Christian, that they do not believe in their Religion: I am of your opinion. But will you dare maintain to me, that your *Socinians* and your *Deists*, with their Religion so rational, and so holy, are themselves all *Saints*? I know many, who are not a jot better than myself. Their belief therefore is quite indifferent with regard to their conduct, and hath not the least influence over their actions; mine consequently doth not in the least interest Society; it is therefore very unjust in you to be for banishing me.

“ Will you undertake to persuade us, that your Ministers, who, for decency's sake, are *Protestants*; but *Socinians* by principle, when they are capable of reasoning; and *Tolerants* by necessity, are any better than *Catholic Priests*? In the County of *Neuf-Chatel* alone I will point out to you

* Let. p. 77.

“ you several, who have been interdicted, deposed,
 “ and turned out for their bad behaviour; much
 “ more criminal for being Libertines, though mar-
 “ ried, than Priests, who are not so. Again will
 “ you maintain, that certain Princes and their
 “ Ministers, whom we know to be of your senti-
 “ ments, are less ambitious, more just, more hu-
 “ mane, more zealous for the happiness of their
 “ people, than the Sovereigns of the *Rhomiſh* Com-
 “ munion? What reformation therefore hath the
 “ belief of a God, of a Providence, or of a Life
 “ to come, in a word, that *Religion ſo ſimple and*
 “ *ſo pure**, which you preach up, wrought in
 “ your manners? Were you as much an *Atheiſt*
 “ as I am, could you act worſe than you do?

“ And you, *John-James Rouſſeau*, who are a
 “ religious man, and fearing God, an Apoſtle and
 “ Martyr of a new ſort, will you dare aſſure me,
 “ that you believe the morality you ſo much extol?
 “ Undoubtedly it was that, which inſpired you to
 “ go to *Paris*, to inflame the minds of the people
 “ againſt the Clergy and the Government; to at-
 “ tack a national Religion, more ancient than the
 “ Monarchy itſelf. Among a people leſs kind, you
 “ would have gone in ceremony to rejoin *Servetus*
 “ and *Vanini*. Doth your Goſpel teach men to
 “ brave the Laws, and diſturb Society? My *prin-*
 “ *ciples* forbid me to do it, and are better than
 “ your Religion.

“ *Spinoſa*, my Maſter, was a mild and peaceable
 Vol. II. I Citizen:

* Let. p. 97.

" Citizen: during his stay at *Paris*, he had no dis-
 " putes with the Parliament or the Archbishop; he
 " respected the public order, and the Police; he
 " did not take it into his head to print his works in
 " *France* with the Privilege of the States of *Hol-*
 " *land*. *Epicurus*, my patron, was the most peace-
 " able Philosopher of his age; contrary to his own
 " principles, he frequented the Temples, he ho-
 " noured the Gods of *Athens*, and never used any
 " Invectives against the Priests or the Magistrates.
 " *Spinoza* the *Atheist*, the *Impious Epicurus* were
 " more virtuous men than you are.

" You have the effrontery to call *Jesus* your
 " Master, and you act directly contrary to what he
 " taught and practised. He ordered *tribute to be*
 " *paid to Cesar, and obedience to the Scribes and*
 " *Pharisees seated in the Chair of Moses**: but you
 " respect neither *Cesar*, nor the Church, nor the
 " Chair, nor the Throne. *Jesus*, when unjustly
 " condemned to death, submitted to the sentence
 " without uttering one word against his Judges;
 " like an innocent Lamb, he prayed for his Execu-
 " tioners; and you, like a furious Lion, rush upon
 " every body you meet in your way. Instead of
 " thanking the Parliament for having treated you
 " with so much indulgence, you roar out against it
 " at a distance, and represent it as a Tribunal
 " void of equity and humanity.

" *John-James*, you are a knave, you neither
 " believe in *Jesus*, nor in his doctrine; you fear
 " neither

* Matt. xxii. 21. 23. 2.

“ neither God nor Man ; you are neither a Christian, or a man fit for Society. The most powerful motive I have for continuing in *Atheism*, is
“ a dread of becoming like you.

“ But must you needs be both insincere and ridiculous ? While you admit of a God, you are
“ not for having men submit to his voice against
“ the testimony of their Reason ; and you want
“ me to take your word contrary to the testimony
“ of your deeds. You accuse the Catholics of inconsistency, in acting contrary to their Faith,
“ and you act precisely the same Farce yourself.

“ Let us even suppose that you, and all the
“ *Socinians*, and all the *Deists* in the world, are
“ really as honest men as you pretend to be ; what
“ right have you to oblige me to believe what you
“ believe, or what you pretend to believe ? Have
“ you any inspection over me ? Provided I do no
“ one any harm, what is it to you, what I think ?
“ *Shall not I be allowed to damn myself my own*
“ *way ? Must I learn from you the road I am to*
“ *take to go to Hell**.

“ You are for having me believe in a God ; and
“ what idea do you give me of him ? He, whom
“ you preach up, is a more whimsical Being, than
“ all the silly Divinities of Heathenism. He sends
“ Fools to teach wisdom ; he establishes Truth on
“ Imposture ; he speaks, without requiring that
“ any one should believe him ; he commands without a desire of being obeyed ; he lays for man-

I 2

“ kind

* Let. p. 9.

“ kind inevitable snares. He will punish the *Catholics* for having been too credulous; he will recompence the *Socinians* and *Deists* for being positive and obstinate. Were I ever to admit any thing so monstrous, I should then think myself guilty of blasphemy.

“ You will not dare to oppose to me, what hath been said to you, and what you made a jest of: *That I ought to keep my sentiments to myself: that I attack the laws and disturbed the public peace, when I have the courage to publish them*. What? will you make me tell a lie in order to be orthodox, and say what I do not think, to please you†! Are your prejudices so worthy of respect, that Reason, Virtue, Justice, and all the good which Truth can procure to mankind, must be sacrificed to them‡? Truth can do no harm, and mankind ought not to be instructed by halves§. To speak to the Public with frankness and resolution, is a right common to all men, and even a duty in every thing that may be an advantage to them¶.*

“ Who are you, to impose silence on me? According to you, the Archbishop of *Paris* hath no right to condemn a stranger, a Heretic, who teaches *Deism* in his Diocese||; and shall the Minister of *Moitier-Travers* have a right to shut up my mouth in his parish? The Parliament of *Paris* is guilty of injustice in condemning to the flames a doctrine contrary to the laws of *France*,
“ and

* Let. p. 60. † Ib. p. 58. ‡ Ib. p. 68. § Ib. p. 69.
¶ Ib. p. 113. || Ib. p. 9.

"and for issuing out a *capias* against the author*.
 "And will the Lordship of *Neuf-Chatel* do an act
 "of justice in proscribing my tenets?

"Ah, ye sly Deists! You preach up Toleration
 "at *Paris*, that you may be suffered to live there;
 "and Tyranny in *Switzerland*, that you may be
 "masters there; and is it thus you impose on the
 "Public? The *Catholics*, while they tolerate no-
 "thing contrary to their Religion, act, at least,
 "according to their principles; while you refuse to
 "tolerate me, you give the lie to your own. Yes,
 "I will preach, I will write, I will print *Atheism*
 "in spite of your Ministers and your Magistrates;
 "and if they drive me out of their Territories,
 "I will go, after the model of your Christian cha-
 "rity, and let the whole universe know, that you
 "are a parcel of *Liars* and *Hypocrites*."

You will bear in mind, Sir, that it is an *Atheist*
 who speaks, and that these gentry have the privi-
 lege of saying any thing. A man, who feared God,
 would take care never to use such brutish language
 in addressing himself to you. But setting aside his
 way of talking, which this impious wretch may
 have learned at your school; it would not be im-
 proper to give some answer to his paultry argu-
 ments: but particularly to do it in such a manner,
 as may agree with your own principles. These
 answers will serve us for a reply to you. Till you
 have done this, we are dispensed with from opposing
 any thing to your invectives. You inform us your-
 self,

self, where you sucked in your prejudices, and which was the road that lead you astray.

I have mixed with people of all characters, say you, I have seen men of all parties, believers of all sects, Free-thinkers of every system . . . Libertines and Philosophers. Bad company indeed, Sir! It is no wonder, that you learned among them to have so vile an opinion of mankind. I have seen the same deceit prevail in Religion, as in Politics†. And really, in your monstrous treatise of Social Compact, you have reasoned on Politics, just as you do here on Religion; the excesses you run into regarding every species of Government, are the best preservatives that can be applied against the sophisms you oppose to Revelation. On both subjects we meet with the same principles, and the same method; that is to say, contradictions every where. You have been already reproached with them; and, if you had as great a love for truth, as you pretend to have, the consequences resulting from them, and to which the impetuosity of your genius hath hurried you on, would before this time have opened your eyes, and have brought you back.*

Because you have judged every known form of Government to be liable to some inconveniences, and that none of them are so perfect, as, in speculation, one might wish them to be; you from thence concluded that they were all of them bad; all of them pernicious: that they ought all to be abolished, and that man ought to be brought back to his

* Let. p. 60. † Ib. p. 70.

his liberty, or rather natural independence: an independence which never existed, but in your brain, and which would be the source of the greatest misfortunes. Your way of reasoning is equally as just, as this would be: "Man every day makes an ill use of his Reason; it serves only to plunge him into error, and to make him take wrong steps in every thing he doth: he ought therefore to be reduced to the rank of brute beasts, and, like them, to be yoked in the plough." But who will there be to drive him?

You ask in what respect the Doctrine of the *Savoyard Curate*, which is your own, can be treated as impious: *Is calling the people back to the true Faith, which they have forgotten, teaching them to believe nothing at all**? Yes, Sir, to teach the people that they are to believe nothing, but what is demonstrated (while you prove at length, that they are not capable of understanding the demonstrations of the Existence of a God†) is certainly teaching them to believe nothing at all. It is sporting with the term *True Faith*, to make use of it in order to express the conviction we have of what is demonstrated to us.

Is it disturbing the public peace, to send every one back to the laws of his country? While you refer others thereto, you observe none of them yourself. While you stayed among us, and under the protection of our laws, you never ceased declaiming against them. If a *Frenchman* were to take it into his

* Let. p. 94. † Ib. p. 39, &c.

his head to do as much at *Geneva*, he would at least be whipped or confined, and very justly. The wise *Genevans*, formerly your Fellow-Citizens, would not have had the patience we had.

Is it destroying all modes of worship, to confine each people to their own? Is desiring them not to change, taking away that which they have? If you had aimed at nothing more, where was the necessity of writing? Without concerning yourself about it, each nation was determined to keep their own mode of worship, and not to change it. You must therefore have had some other design.

Is respecting all Religions, making a jest of all Religions? You have shewn no respect to any. You reproach them every one with Error, Falshood, Absurdity, Fanaticism, Hypocrisy, Barbarity, the Effusion of human blood, and with being the cause of all the Misfortunes of the Universe. And though you had pretended some respect for other Religions, did you shew any to ours, by writing against it and its Ministers, whatever the most violent passion could suggest?

Though you had treated them with greater decency, ought you not to have foreseen the pernicious effects of all you have said against *Revelation*, under pretence of proposing your difficulties? The young Libertines, who devour your works, rather than they read them, will very carefully retain all your objections against revealed Religion; but they will not be at the trouble to meditate on your demonstrations of natural Religion. This latter is too weak a curb to restrain the fury of their passions,

sions, which they want to justify, The only fruit they reap from their reading, is a determined contempt of the public Religion, and of the Laws that authorize it. You form therefore, at one and the same time, bad Christians and bad Subjects: you are guilty of an imprudence, which you yourself condemn.

While there remains, say you, any good belief among men, quiet souls ought not be disturbed, nor the Faith of the simple alarmed with difficulties, which they cannot solve, and which make them uneasy, without informing them.* This is exactly what you have done. Notwithstanding the errors, abuses, and evils you impute to Christianity, you will not deny, but that there still remains some *good belief* among those who profess it, especially with regard to morals, which you look upon as the most essential point. You will not deny, but that the greater number are simple, honest believers, who follow their Religion with sincerity. Why therefore should you “have disturbed these peaceable souls? Why “should you have alarmed them with difficulties, “which they cannot solve, which only make them “uneasy, without informing them?” Why should you thus expose them to the most dangerous, and most inevitable of temptations? Why, in a word, would you write a book, which can produce no other effect, than to make those easy, who have no Religion, and rob those that have any, of that which they have?

You

You make a merit of never having personally attacked any one: *I have spoken some harsh truths to the age I live in, but never to any one in particular**. You maintain that every one may be allowed to "speak to the public with frankness, and resolution," but not to censure any particular. Perhaps the maxim reversed would be full as just. To point out his error to a particular person, is the brotherly correction commanded in the Gospel; but to reprimand the public belongs only to such, whose station in life makes it a duty. Your rare moderation hath belied itself, at least with regard to the Clergy, and your stoical constancy was not proof against your bad humour.

Because you were reproached with Impiety, or want of Religion, you pretend to cast this reproach on the Clergy. *The Impious are those, who pretend to be the interpreters of the Divinity, Umpires between God and man, and challenge to themselves the honours due to him†*. But if God hath been pleased to honour men with the sacred title of his *Interpreters*, what right have you to accuse them of Impiety for bearing that character, while they endeavour to fulfil the duties thereof? If you had read the Gospel to inform yourself, and not to contradict it, you would have remembered, that *Jesus Christ* said to his Apostles: *As my Father sent me, so I send you†*. Will you deny that *Jesus Christ* was sent to be the *Interpreter* of the Divinity? Was it Impiety in St. Paul to say: *Let man so account of us,*

* Let. p. 113. Note. † Emil. T. iv. p. . . . Let.
p. 132. † John xx. 21.

us, as of the Ministers of Christ, and the Dispensers of the Mysteries of God†. And: We are therefore the Embassadors of Christ, God, as it were, exhorting by us‡. Where are any of the Clergy who challenge to themselves the honours due only to God? This, Sir, is another calumny; you ought to have remembered, that to recriminate upon others, is not clearing yourself.

But this is only a continuation of the bitter reproaches you cast upon the Clergy; you had already said in another place, that *There are few Priests, who believe in God§. They believe in him more sincerely than you do; they do not set themselves up for Judges and Arbiters of what God can, or cannot reveal to us: when he hath once spoken, they believe themselves obliged to give credit to his word, and to teach it to all mankind: Their belief in him is more efficacious than yours; they consecrate themselves to a painful and laborious ministry; they employ whatever strength and talents they have to make God known to the poor common people, whom you despise, and to whose salvation you have not vouchsafed to consecrate one single instruction of all those you have given. Their Faith is more useful than yours; it engages them to help the poor and the sick, to comfort the afflicted, to pity and reclaim sinners, to do good to all after the example of their master, to bear with patience your abuse, and to pray to God, that he may enlighten you. A Rector in a country village, an assistant Curate*

† 1 Cor. iv. 1.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 20.

§ Let. p. 46.

Curate of a Parish,* do more good works in a week than perhaps you will do in twenty years. Ask, Sir, the poor *Catholics* of these Mountains, which both you and I inhabit, who have no other support, no other counsel, no other resource, no other friend besides their Pastor; you will learn from them, whether or no their Priests be such as you represent them; whether they be not more respected than *your Ministers*. You yourself have said by the mouth of the Savoyard Curate, "That a Parish Priest is a Minister of Charity, as a Magistrate is a Minister of Justice*." Are then Parish-Priests no Priests?

You go on in the same strain: *The Impious are those, who arrogate to themselves the right of exercising the power of God on earth, and pretend to open and shut heaven's gates as they please.* Rather say: 'The Impious are those, who refuse to acknowledge the power which God hath given to his Ministers; who dare give the lie to *Jesus Christ*, who said to them: *To you will I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatever you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven†.*" They never pretended "to open or shut heaven's gates as they pleased," but agreeably to the spirit of *Jesus Christ*, and the rules he prescribed. Is it not somewhat singular, that you should refuse to the Pastors appointed by *Jesus Christ* an authority, which you give, of your own head, to Fathers, and Husbands with regard to women.

The

* Emil. T. v. p. . . . † Matt. xviii. 18.

The Impious are those, who order Libels to be read in Churches . . . At this horrible idea all my blood is in a flame, and tears of indignation flow from my eyes. Tears of repentance would have been more beneficial. This then is the whole of the crime of that respectable Prelate, whom you abuse to such a degree; he unmasked your errors in the assembly of the Faithful; he was desirous to preserve his flock from the poison you wanted to infect them with. He was undoubtedly in the wrong; he ought to have suffered you to dogmatize at your ease, and publicly teach Irreligion.

But it ought to be some comfort to the Clergy to see how you treat the Magistrates. They are *incompetent* to judge a Foreigner: they are *rash, unjust, violent, barbarous* in condemning your works*. That is as much as to say, that any Foreigner hath a right to make what stay he pleases at *Paris*, without being amenable to any law or tribunal; that he may teach, write, print whatever he thinks fit, without being liable to any punishment, or being sought after by the Police. In what country have you ever found such a system of jurisprudence as that? If you have founded your *Social Compact* on such principles, it must be a bad constructed edifice indeed. You reproach us with having no schools for teaching the Law of Nature, or the Law of Nations†. They would be really very necessary; but only for such as think as you do.

You see, Sir, that there is not any one subject,
Vol. II. K on

* Let. p. 6. † Let. p. 80. Note.

on which you can keep within the bounds of truth. Perpetually hurried on by the impetuosity of your character, you run forward without seeing the abyſſes open before your feet. You are the moſt ſtriking example of the exceſſes a ſuperior Genius may run into, when no longer reſtrained by the curb of authority : and this is the moſt profitable leſſon that can be drawn from your works.

The reading of them, ſo far from ſtaggering the belief of a Revelation in a ſound underſtanding, and well informed mind, ought rather to contribute to the ſtrengthening of it : for thus would a man of ſenſe reaſon. “ If *Deiſm* were a rational ſyſtem, “ M. *Rouſſeau* was of all men the moſt capable of “ placing it in the cleareſt light ; he had all the penetration poſſible to lay hold of its firſt principles, “ and to unfold the conſequences thereof ; the moſt “ brilliant elocution to give us a reliſh for them, and “ all imaginable zeal to perſuade us of the truth of “ them. With ſuch extraordinary talents he hath “ only formed an abſurd Hypotheſis, an unconnected and contradictory plan, a building wherein “ every part ſtands in need of a prop ; a chaos, “ rather than a ſyſtem. *Deiſm* therefore will never “ be any thing elſe : the very extravagance of its “ errors is the moſt complete demonſtration of the “ truth, and certitude of our Religion.”

Before I conclude, it will not be amiſs to lay before the reader two Portraits drawn by yourſelf, leaving to him the liberty of making the application.

“ I conſulted the Philoſophers, I turned over “ their books, I examined their different opinions.

“ I

“ I found them all vain, dictatorial, and dogma-
 “ tical, even in their pretended Scepticism ; igno-
 “ rant of nothing, proving nothing ; ridiculing
 “ one another ; and in this last particular, where-
 “ in they were all agreed, they seemed to be all in
 “ the right. They triumph, when they attack ;
 “ they are spiritless and without vigour, when on
 “ the defensive. If you weigh their arguments,
 “ they are only fit to overthrow ; if you number
 “ voices, each is reduced to his own ; they agree
 “ in nothing, but wrangling ; to hearken to them,
 “ was not the way to get rid of my uncertainty.
 “ I perceived the Insufficiency of the human under-
 “ standing to be the first cause of this prodigious di-
 “ versity of sentiment among them, and that Pride
 “ was the second*.

“ Flee all those, who under pretence of explain-
 “ ing nature, sow in the hearts of men disconso-
 “ lating doctrines, and whose apparent scepticism
 “ is a hundred times more dictatorial and dogma-
 “ tical, than the decisive tone of their adversaries.
 “ Under the haughty pretence, that they alone are
 “ enlightened, true and sincere, they are imperi-
 “ ously for making us submit to their peremptory
 “ decisions ; they impose on us, instead of the true
 “ principles of things, the unintelligible systems,
 “ which they have built in their own imagination :
 “ in other respects, overthrowing, destroying,
 “ trampling under foot whatever other men respect,
 “ they take from the afflicted the last remaining
 “ consolation in their misery ; from the powerful

K 2

“ and

“and rich the only curb of the passions; they
 “pluck up from the bottom of the heart a remorse
 “for crimes committed, the hopes of a reward for
 “virtue, and after all boast of being the Benefac-
 “tors of mankind. Never, say they, doth truth
 “hurt mankind. That I believe, as much as they
 “do; and in my opinion, this is a proof, that what
 “they teach, is not the truth*.”

I do not know, Sir, whether I am mistaken or not, but I think I have executed, what I promised. I have followed, in the order they presented themselves; your arguments, your objections, your invectives; and have shewn, that as often as you have attacked our belief, so often have you been in the wrong. “You were not afraid,” said you, “that any one
 “should refute your proofs†;” I, nevertheless, look upon my refutation as complete; and, to make use of your own words, I believe it, *Sheltered from any reply, wherein good sense reigns.* If you discover any thing false and weak in my answers, you owe so much regard to the public, as to inform it of them. You will undoubtedly do it with more moderation; on my side, I will impose a law on myself to answer you with all the respect and politeness, which become my station of life, and which are due to your talents. Waiting, till you procure me this satisfaction, I am, with the greatest respect,

Sir, your most humble, &c.

END of the TENTH LETTER.

L E T -

* Emil. T. i. p. 181. † Lett. p. 116.



L E T T E R X I .

In Answer to those written from the Mountain.

S I R,

THE Public was thoroughly persuaded, that you would not hold to your resolution of writing no more: the promises of an author are not much to be depended on; a pen so fruitful as yours is, was not made to lie long idle. It must be acknowledged, that there was a lucky concurrence of circumstances to procure you Antagonists worthy of yourself: the Consistory and Council of Geneva, the Prelates of the Clergy of France, and a Crowned head. There is so much glory in having to contend with such adversaries as these, that though you should be in the wrong with respect to your particular dispute with each of them, you ought to be pardoned. True it is indeed, that one is somewhat at a loss how to reconcile these smart disputes with that modesty you pretend to,

and that love of obscurity, of which you make such solemn protestations. You wisely despise common aggressors, and trifling literary disputes, to measure with what is the greatest in the world: thus, in your very retreat, you still attract the eyes of all *Europe*. This moderation is not ill judged; but it doth not appear to us very meritorious.

But let this be as it may, we ought to congratulate with ourselves for the events which produced *The Letters written from the Mountain*. You therein inform us of some facts, which it will be of advantage to know; you therein retract the Apology you had made for the Protestant Ministers. By way of punishing them for having censured you, you at last unveil their true sentiments; you demonstrate the contradiction of their principles; you carry your sincerity almost so far, as to agree, that we reason more justly than they do. In a word, by starting new objections against the proofs of Revelation, you afford us an opportunity of adding whatever might be still wanting to the clearing up of that important question.

The dispute between you and the Council of *Geneva*, is foreign to our purpose. As this makes the subject of your six last letters, we shall confine ourselves to the three first alone. With your leave, we will begin by drawing the consequences, which result from what you have owned: we will then take notice of some new Falsities, which have dropped from your pen: and lastly we will come to your Objections.

First

First of all you acknowledge that there are some errors in your books. "I myself perceive," say you, "a sufficient number; nor do I doubt, but that others may perceive a great many more; and that there are still far more, which neither I, nor others see*." As you, at the same time, acknowledge, that an error in matters of Religion, is always of importance, and may be prejudicial†; the public good requires, that those you have fallen into should be laid open, in order to prevent the mischief they might produce. If, by chance, I succeed in bringing them to light, and undeceiving the Reader, you cannot be angry at me: and this is one advantage gained.

You demonstrate, that, whereas the fundamental principle of the Reformation was to admit of no other Judge, but Reason in matters of Faith, and to reject all Authority‡: When Protestants have recourse to the way of Authority; when they make *Synodical Decisions*; and *Professions of Faith*; when they *censure* Opinions, and *prescribe* to the Faithful what they are to believe; they renounce the Principle the Reformation was grounded on§. You might have said, that they quite overthrow it. Dogmatical Decisions cannot be allowed, or borne with, but in the principles of the Catholic Church. "Let any one this day shew me, that, in a matter of Faith, I am obliged to submit to the decision of any man; to-morrow I turn Catholic; and every

* Let. I. p. 8. † Ib. p. 6. ‡ Ib. p. 45. § Ib. p. 52.

"every man, who reasoneth justly, and is sincere, will do the same*." These are your own words.

You own therefore, that as the Ministers were unjust (according to their principles) in rejecting your doctrine; so were the Catholic Pastors, by their principles, obliged to censure it; and hereby you acknowledge, at the same time, the imprudence of your conduct, in publishing, in a Catholic country, a book, that attacks the Catholic belief; and the injustice of your invectives against the respectable Prelate, who condemned you. Could you complain of the Archbishop of *Paris* for acting against you according to the principles of his Faith, and the rules of his Church?

By this same declaration you establish a still more essential Truth, viz. *That every man, who reasoneth justly, and is sincere*, ought to determine either to be a *Catholic*, or a *Deist*; there is no other course to steer for any one, who knows how to reason: that which the Protestants wanted to hold, is ridiculous, and contradictory. In matters of Religion, we must either allow a living authority to decide of Doctrine, or hold to Reason alone: in the first case, Catholicism is established: in the second case, Reason goes straight on to *Deism*; and it was that which led you thither. The complete proof of this, is the present state to which you shew the Protestant Religion reduced among the Professors thereof. But till you have also shewn us, that *Deism* is the only Religion, which *Jesus Christ* designed to establish,

* Let. I. p. 52.

† Let II. p. 52 & 54.

blish, you will be so good as to allow us to stick to the Faith of that Church, which he founded.

You make us take notice*, That they are not only the Ministers now-a-days, who abandon in practice the principles to which their Religion owes its existence, but that this contradiction is co-eval with the Reformation itself. Thus you confirm what the Catholics reproached the first Reformers with, and to which they never could give any answer. You afford us some room to doubt, if men of learning can sincerely profess a Religion, whose principles and practices are necessarily contradictory. "And in reality," add you, "what an advantage, in this point, have they not given to the Catholics; and what a pity is it to see those men of learning, those men of such enlightened understandings, who reasoned so justly on every other subject, when they come to defend themselves, reason so silly, and so contrary to all reason in that point alone? These contradictions, however, will prove nothing farther, but that they followed their passions, more than they did their principles. Their harsh Orthodoxy itself was a Heresy, This was indeed the spirit of the Reformers, but not the spirit of the Reformation†." You must, Sir, have been very angry at your Brethren, to have thus uncovered the shame of your mother.

"The Protestant Religion is tolerant by principle, it is essentially tolerant, it is so, as far as it
" is

* Let. II. p. 49.

† Ib. p. 52.

"is possible to be so, as the only Dogma it will "not tolerate, is *Intolerance*." Very well; the reflection is just, though old. *Toleration* is the only essential Dogma of the Reformation; it cannot even subsist without it: even an *Atheist*, provided he were *tolerant*, believes enough for salvation among *Protestants*. *Universal Toleration* is the whole Creed of the *Holy and Blessed Reformation*, with such as know how to think. I durst not say so much in my Fifth Letter; but you at last tell us it is so, and it would not become us to give you the lie.

This secret indeed is not as yet revealed to the people. Both in teaching and practice the Protestants are much more Intolerant than the Church of *Rome*; this may be shewn from their very Catechisms†.

According to you, "The Ministers no longer "know what they believe, what they would be at, "or

* Let. II. p. 50.

† In the Larger Catechism of *Berne*, which is taught in the County of *Neuf-Châtel*, and all the *Pays de Vaud* it is said p. 136. that the Pope is *Antichrist*. p. 218. That the Mass is *curst Idolatry*. p. 189. That the Papists baptize with a mixture of Water, Oil, Salt, and Spittle. p. 216. That they are more cruel than the *Jews* were to *Jesus Christ*. p. 224. That they adore Bread. p. 262. That they call the Pope: *The Great God on Earth*, &c. The Lutherans and other Sects are also reproached with errors. This Catechism is acknowledged for Symbolical by the Company of Pastors of *Neuf-Châtel* in their *Memoire historique & raisonnée* presented to the Council of State in 1761, p. 40. The injurious inscriptions against Catholics, that are met with at *Geneva*, *Neuf-Châtel*, and other

“or what they say*.” “If they be asked, whether
 “or no *Jesus Christ* be God, they dare not give an
 “answer†.” “If they be asked, what Mysteries
 “they admit of, they dare give no answer. . . .
 “Their temporal Interest alone determines their
 “Faith‡. One does not know what they believe,
 “or what they do not believe; nay, no one knows
 “what they even pretend to believe. The only
 “way they have of establishing their own Faith, is
 “by attacking that of others.” The picture doth
 not seem to flatter much. As for us, timid Catholics,
 we should be afraid of hurting charity by
 painting the Ministers in such colours; but you
 must know them better than we do.

These however are the men, whose Apologist
 you formerly were; whose elogium you gave us,
 while you had any hopes of their suffrages. But have
 they refused to grant you them? All their merit is
 eclipsed. This diminishes a little the credit of the
 judgment you pass on others; one may easily see, that
 you distribute incense or blame by the measure of your
 own interest. Your sentiments are like the Faith of
 the Ministers: they change with circumstances.

The picture of the Patriarchs of the Reforma-
 tion is equally bright, as drawn by your pencil§.
 They at first give it out, that they are sent to re-
 form the Church; some proof of their mission is re-
 quired

other places, are well known. Is filling Children's heads
 with prejudices against other Communions, the way to instill
 Principles of Toleration? The Catholics in their Catechisms
 use no invectives against Protestants.

* Let. III. p. 51. † Ib. p. 3. ‡ Ib. p. 54. § Ib. p. 63, &c.

quired of them : they answer that no other is necessary, but the evidence of their doctrine. You make us sensible how ridiculous this answer was, by shewing that all sects equally pretend that their doctrine is evident*. But you omit one material circumstance. When *Muncer* with his *Anabaptists* began to preach a doctrine contrary to that of *Luther*, this haughty Reformer demanded aloud of him proofs of his Mission, and evident Miracles.† Thus he subjected others to a trial, which he thought proper to decline himself.

Nor did *Calvin* act less inconsistently. After having declaimed so much against the Authority of the Church, and the Tyranny of the Pope, he assumed to himself a Despotism a hundred times more absolute and tyrannical at *Geneva*. "What man," say you†, "was ever more dogmatical, more imperious, more decisive, more divinely infallible in his own opinion, than *Calvin* ? The least opposition, the very daring to propose to him the least objection, was a work of *Satan*, and deserving of the flames. *Servetus* was not the only one who forfeited his life for daring to think differently from him." Such was the Apostle raised by God to reform the Church !

This self-contradiction, always inherent to the Reformation, hath continued to our times, and every now and then affords us some new scenes. The condemnation of the Minister *Petit-Pierre*, in the County of *Neuf-Chatel*, is recent, and cannot

* Let. III. p. 65. † Sleidan. L. XI. Ed. 1635. p. 69.
 † Let. III. p. 67.

not be unknown to you. "What a subject of triumph over us," says one of his Judges, very honestly, "shall we not afford by this to our neighbours of the Church of *Rome*, who, without this, have a sufficiently bad opinion of our Reformation?" And how can Catholics ever have a good opinion of it, when even those who have been brought up in its bosom, as you yourself, Sir, were, own that it was established by the most ridiculous of all farces?

If it had not been for the bugbear of the Church of *Rome*, the great work of the Reformation had been long since farther advanced. The fear of affording the Catholics new matter of triumph, obliges them to preserve, if not the ancient doctrine, at least the ancient language. *If we suffer any one to teach the limited duration of Hell's torments, what will the Catholics say?* Such was the law that dictated the condemnation of *Petit-Pierre*. Thus the Church of *Rome*, while it maintains among its own children the Unity of Faith, preserves the remains of it amongst its enemies in spite of their teeth: she obtains of them through fear of shame, what they will not grant her from a motive of respect.

According to you, the Catholics took a wrong course at the birth of the Reformation†. "Instead of wrangling about the arguments of their adversaries, they ought to have said to them . . . You
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* See the Writing entitled: *Mes Reflexions*, pieces Justif. p. 134.

† Let. III. p. 66, &c. See *Mes Reflexions*, pieces Justif. p. 66, &c.

“ declare open war against us ; you blow up the
 “ coals on every side . . . You will absolutely con-
 “ vert, or even force. You dogmatize, you preach,
 “ you censure, you anathematize, you excommu-
 “ nicate, you punish, you put to death, you exer-
 “ cise the authority of Prophets, and you give your-
 selves out only for private men, &c.” Take care,
 Sir, what you say, I desire you. These facts,
 which you suppose certain, and which really are so,
 are contrary to what you maintained in another
 part of your writings. You said that the “ Pro-
 “ testants at first only desired to be suffered, and to
 “ live in peace: that they never made use of force,
 “ but to repel their Persecutors* :” here you own
 that the Catholics might have justly reproached
 them with having kindled the fire of Persecution
 from the birth of their Religion. The incurable
 distemper of the Reformation hath seized you ;
 self-contradictions therein are inevitable : *Calvin,*
Luther, the Ministers, and you yourself fall into
 them, the moment you attempt to enter upon any
 Theological Disquisition.

“ The Roman Clergy laugh in their sleeves, and
 “ let them go on†.” No, Sir ; we do not laugh
 at all ; we weep over the blindness of our brethren :
 but perhaps God designs to turn this excess of
 blindness to their cure !

You make another confession with regard to the
 part you made the Savoyard Curate act‡. “ Per-
 “ haps I might have been justly reproached with
 “ impropriety in making a Catholic Priest speak in
 “ such

* Let. p. 86, 87.

† Let. II. p. 52.

‡ Ib. p. 59.

“such a manner, as no Catholic Priest ever spoke.” In reality, Sir, you made him speak like a true Protestant; or rather you made him speak a language, which belongs not to any Religion now existing, or which was ever possible. By aiming at disguising him, you have made him contract your bad habit of frequently contradicting himself: I have taken notice of several instances of this.

In a word, you own that Catholics may easily refute your letters*, because here your dispute is not with the Catholics, nor are your principles the same. You might also have added, that you sometimes change your principles occasionally, as you do facts. But that is nothing. I admit the possibility of a refutation; I even flatter myself that I have done it already, when I destroyed the fundamental Principle, on which your whole system rests, as well as all your arguments, and your objections. You may depend upon it, that I will not refute what you have proved against the Protestants, viz. that they always contradict themselves. I really think so myself, as well as you; I have been long since convinced of it: and dare engage, that they will not undertake to prove the contrary.

However opposite the Catholics and Protestants may be in other respects, they agree (at least the latter did formerly agree) that God could reveal, and hath revealed to us incomprehensible Dogmas, that is, *Mysteries*: that to oblige us to believe them, it was necessary to authorize the Mission of

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* Let. III. p. 99.

his Envoys by supernatural works, and by miracles: that he thus in fact characterized the Mission of *Jesus Christ* and of his Apostles. It is true, that the *Protestants*, by admitting this principle, wound themselves with their own weapons, since the first Reformers did not prove their Mission in the same manner. This you have shewn, and many others had done it before you: it concerns the Protestants to get rid of that inconveniency as well as they can.

But the claim of the Catholics remains untouched; you have shewn no contradiction in it yet, nor will you ever do it. This principle, which is the contradictory to yours, once established, your whole system falls to the ground; and all your objections cannot prop it up.

“ Let any one prove to me to-day, that I am obliged to submit to the decisions of any one, to-morrow I become a Catholic: and every man, who knows how to reason justly, and is sincere, will do the same.” This hath been already proved. I have shewn you, in the Fourth Letter, that this obligation follows by a chain of consequences from the fundamental principle which I proved in direct contradiction to yours in the First Letter. Since God hath revealed to us incomprehensible Mysteries, the truth or falsehood of which our reason cannot immediately see, he could not make them credible to us, but by external proofs, and the divine character, with which he hath invested his Envoys. Now his Envoys are a perpetual and ever-subsisting Body: we at this day owe them

them the same docility, the same submission, that was due to them the moment they received their commission from *Jesus Christ*. I shall not repeat the proofs of this.

The second thing we have to do, is to take notice of some false, violent, indecent propositions, which slipped from you during the bad humour you were in at the Protestants, and which you will have no difficulty in owning to have been such, when your bile is abated.

You had granted* "that the errors of authors are often of no consequence, but that there are also some, which may do mischief, even contrary to the intention of him, who commits them: and that those they fall into with respect to Religion, are frequently of this nature." You afterwards maintain†, "that an Error, with regard to Dogmas, or points of Faith, only hurts those, who err." Here is a small contradiction. In reality, an Error purely internal, and unknown to the Public, can hurt none but those, who err: but an Error made public, consigned to books, which are dispersed all over the world, doth such an Error as this do mischief to none, but to him who committed it? Is it true, that "human tribunals cannot extend their authority so far, as to take cognizance of such Errors?" This is the sophism, which those, who pretend to dogmatize, are eternally guilty of. They claim nothing more, say they, than liberty of thought: but whoever enquired after their thoughts? Is the liberty of thinking as

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* Let. I. p. 9. † Ib. p. 14.

we please, the same as that of preaching, writing, and printing with impunity.

But if you have taught any Errors, they were involuntary ; if you have done any harm, it was innocently done : the Magistrate cannot punish you for that : *nothing but the will ought to be punished in the evil action**. That principle is false : the Magistrate never punishes the Will or Intention, for he cannot know them ; he punishes the outward criminal action, which is the only thing his authority extends to. What strange Police should we introduce at last, could the presumed innocence of the Intention justify the crime ? An assassin will be acquitted upon declaring, that he stabbed his enemy only to prevent his committing a crime, which would have brought him to the wheel. There are daily instances of persons being tried for involuntary murder, or manslaughter. When there are good proofs, that it was accidental and unforeseen, Letters of Grace are after all necessary, before they can be fully acquitted. But if it be proved, that they ought to have foreseen the murder, and that they ought to have refrained from the action, which occasioned the accident, they certainly would not be acquitted. God alone is Judge of the Intention ; but men are not to presume it good, when the action itself is evil. You pretend that you may teach as many errors as you please ; and that no one is entitled to judge you guilty, since your Intention was good ? The judgment of that is left to God ; but
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you are punished for your open and public doctrine.

“ You have not hurt Religion, you have only “ attacked blind Fanaticism, cruel Superstition, and “ stupid prejudices*.” But if you are pleased to call the very grounds of Religion by the names of *Fanaticism, Superstition, Prejudice* ; will making a wrong use of words justify you ? With a mere empty sound of words you soon decide the question.

You presently explain what you mean by *superstition*. “ Dogmatical or Theological Christianity,” say you, “ on account of the multitude and obscurity of its Dogmas, and particularly for being obliged to admit them, is a field of battle always “ open for men, and this without being able, with “ all their interpretations and decisions, to prevent “ new disputes about the very decisions themselves†.” If all the Institutions, about which men may dispute, are bad, and ought to be abolished ; every thing is bad, and ought to be destroyed all over the world. Manners, and all sorts of Government afford matter of dispute ; must we therefore destroy them all to prevent disputes ?

“ The best expedient of all, is to leave Christianity to its own true spirit, without imposing any “ other obligation, but that of conscience ; without “ any other restraint with respect to Dogmas, than “ Manners and the Laws.” Be it so for a moment, and then there will be no more disputes. But there

* Let. I. p. 16. † Ib. p. 34.

there are already disputes about all the Dogmas of Natural Religion, which you call *True Christianity*, viz. the *Existence* of God, his *Unity*, his *Providence*, the *Spirituality*, *Immortality*, and *Liberty* of our Soul, the *Punishments* and *Rewards* of a *Life to come*; there is not any one of these points, against which books have not been written, and are not written every day. If we retain none of these Dogmas, on what will the sanction of the Laws be grounded?

Look into the *Philosophical Dictionary*, that *Elixir* of the human mind, where the whole essence of modern Philosophy is melted down, as it were, in a crucible. There we are taught, in a learned manner, that *Atheism* is not so very dangerous an error, as it is thought to be; that a society of *Atheists* may very well subsist; that the *Roman Senate*, which is the grandest thing in history, were a meeting of *Atheists*. We are there taught, that natural reason cannot clearly prove, that we have a soul; that *Liberty* is an empty sound void of meaning, &c. But we have not seen the end of it yet; this valuable Collection is only just begun. The author must be surely some great man; for none but a great man can be allowed to reason so sillily.

You know another great man, if he be not the same, who cannot *pardon you for believing in God*. But will he pardon any body else? See then every man who believes in God exposed to the treatment the Divines met with from you, and whom you do not pardon. A fine way of putting an end to disputes!

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But here the poor Christian, who believes nothing, but the *Gospel in its purity*, is at a sad loss. "According to one *great man*," may he say, "the *Spirituality* of the Soul is neither known, nor demonstrated by *Reason*, but by *Revelation* alone. According to another *Great man* (Mr. Rousseau) God can reveal nothing, but what is demonstrated by *Reason*: therefore the *Spirituality* of the Soul cannot be revealed: therefore it is not certain either from *Reason*, or *Revelation*. Where are we now."

You bring again upon the board a *Paradox*, or rather a palpable falsehood, which you maintained with all your might in your *Treatise on Social Compact*. "So far am I from taxing the Gospel in its purity, of being pernicious to society, that, on the contrary, I find it too friendly to it, including too far all mankind in a Legislation, which ought to be exclusive of some part; instilling Humanity, rather than Patriotism, and tending to form men only, rather than Citizens*. Patriotism," add you in a note, "and Humanity are incompatible in their energy, and especially in a whole nation."

If you mean a *Fanatical Patriotism*, which makes an Idol of its Country, and is for sacrificing to it the whole world, you are certainly in the right: carried to that excess, it is equally contrary to Religion, and Humanity: and it then becomes a Vice, and is no longer a Virtue. If Christianity hath happily banished from the face of the earth this

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* Let. I. p. 35.

Patriotic madness, so specious in books, and so detestable in society, is it a misfortune that it hath done so? It is this, you will say, which formed so many Heroes among the *Greeks* and *Romans*. Let it be so. Would the world have lost any thing, if it had never known such Heroes? There had been fewer usurpations and crimes, less blood spilt, fewer provinces laid waste, fewer cities reduced to ashes.

“The Gospel rather forms men, than citizens.” Is then a citizen no longer a man, according to your ideas? He is then a monster: blessed therefore a thousand times be Religion for having exterminated the race! No, Sir, Christianity doth not form a citizen after the manner of the *Social Compact*, that is to say, a fierce Republican, who sees in the whole world only the city he was born in; who lays down a plan to make it Mistress (cost what it will) of the whole earth; who makes no account of the greatest crimes, provided they may tend to promote his fine design. But it forms wise, virtuous, peaceable citizens, who love their country, without hating other nations: who desire to see it flourish, without crushing or destroying others: who respect the laws without blaming, censuring, or undertaking to reform other Governments. Such citizens as these seem full as good as the former.

Thanks be to the Gospel, we shall never again see a *Paulus Emilius* destroy in one single province seventy towns, and put in chains an hundred and fifty thousand slaves. We shall never again hear a furious *Cato* concluding all his harangues in the senate,

senate, with these words of a madman: *Delenda est Carthago; Carthage must be destroyed.* We shall no more brag of the exploits of a *Scipio Africanus*, whose rage could not be satisfied with any thing less than the burning of that unhappy city. We shall never again stand in fear of a brutal *Mummius*, sack-
ing, destroying, and burning the most beautiful city in all *Greece*, because its glory eclipsed *Rome*; or of punishing thousands of innocent people for the madness of two or three seditious people. If the last war, in which all *Europe* was engaged, had been carried on by such Heroes as these, *Germany* at this day had been nothing but a frightful desert.

“The science of Salvation, and the science of Government are very different things*.” If you speak of an ambitious Government, which considers only itself, you are in the right; if you mean a wise, equitable, and moderate Government, you are in the wrong.

“The doctrine of the Gospel hath no other object, than that of calling and bringing all men to salvation: their liberty, their welfare here below, is considered as nothing; *Jesus* hath said so a thousand times†.” The doctrine of the Gospel hath for its chief end the salvation of mankind; but we maintain that it also procures their welfare, as far as it possibly can be done here below. When *Jesus* preached on earth, the circumstances were different from what they were afterwards: there was no embracing the Gospel, without being exposed to banishment, slavery, persecutions, and death:

* Let. I. p. 35. † Ib. p. 36.

death: this is what *Jesus* said, and it was the truth. But now, since the world, in great part at least, is become Christian, we again repeat it, that by an exact observation of the laws of the Gospel, both individuals and states find thereby at the same time, liberty, welfare, preservation, and prosperity of Government. To represent Christianity in any other light, is to render it odious; it is to insinuate that its laws were not made for those, who govern; that to be a good citizen, a person ought to have no Religion. Whatever therefore you may say, it is your opinion, and not ours, that is impious.

You renew your complaints "that people do not enter into the true meaning of your books; and that they impute to you sentiments you never had*." That may be: but then it is more your fault, than that of your readers. You never express yourself exactly; you make use of no correctives; you treat, with all the fire of enthusiasm, questions, which demand all the phlegm of good sense. "I do not see, as other people do," said you, at your first setting out†, "I have been long since reproached with it. But doth it depend on me to give myself other eyes, or acquire to myself other ideas? No: it depends on me not to be bound in my own sense, and not to believe myself wiser than all the world besides." This nevertheless is exactly what you do. Because your system hath not been adopted; because you every where meet with such as contradict you; you raise

* Let. I. p. 36, &c.

† Preface to *Emilius*, p. 5.

raise your voice, you use every body in the most contemptuous manner. If you are in a fever, is nobody else allowed to be well?

Nothing is so laughable, as the description you give us of the state of Religion in *Europe* at that instant of time, when you first published your book. "Religion, every where brought into disrepute by
"Philosophy, had lost its ascendancy even over the
"vulgar. The Ecclesiastics, obstinately bent on
"propping it up on its weaker side, had suffered
"all the rest to be sapped, and the whole edifice,
"leaning to one side, was ready to fall. Contro-
"versies had ceased, because they were no longer
"interesting to any one; and peace reigned among
"all parties, because no one troubled his head a-
"bout his own. To lop off the bad branches,
"the tree had been cut down; to plant it again,
"the trunk alone ought to have been left stand-
"ing*." This is really a wonderful piece of painting in imagination. But was it possible that you could imagine, that you would ever be able to change the ideas of all *Europe* by a book? Alas! the Gospel hath not as yet been able to change yours! The success hath not answered the grandeur of your designs; this is what you deplore. The moment you had seized, hath slipped away from you; it never will return again; all hopes are lost†.

Your secret is at last come out; the timid Curate, who modestly proposes doubts to his Pupil, concealed a Legislator, who thought he had found.

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* Let. V. p. 201.

† Ib. p. 203.

the happy moment to establish on solid grounds an universal peace*; who wanted to do with regard to Religion, what the *Abbè de Saint-Pierre* had attempted with regard to Politics. His projects were called the “*Dreams of an honest man* ;” and in reality they can do nobody any harm. But it is far more dangerous to dream in point of Religion, than in a matter of Politics; and in every case, the more brilliant and pleasing the dream, the more vexatious it is to awake out of it. But let us go up to the cause of your dreaming.

You judged of the state of *Europe* from the *ton* of the company you kept: but there was your mistake. “Religion was brought into disrepute by “Philosophy:” but only among such as knew nothing of either the one or the other: if the contagion hath seized the vulgar in great towns, the rest of the kingdom is still in health, and we hope it will continue so. It is not “on the weak side that the “Ecclesiastics prop up Religion,” it is on the strong side, by the unshakeable certitude of the proofs of a Revelation. Notwithstanding all your efforts to attack it on that side, you have made no breach in it: and I will let you see by and by, that the fresh blows you aim at it, are as impotent as the former: and that all the arrows you have shot, have been long since blunted. In vain did you imagine the edifice “ready to fall,” the almighty hand, that first erected it, will be able to support it: as formerly, it

* Let. V. p. 292.

it will continue to oppose to all the pride of false sages, the uprightness of heart, and good sense of the little ones, and the simple. "Controversies had ceased," because we never think of attacking others, but only of defending ourselves: we should always be quiet, would so many turbulent writers be silent, and suffer us to be so too. You have enkindled the fire more violently than ever, and renewed former disputes; and this is the only fruit of your labours. There is still more vanity in your imagining that you have replanted the tree; it never was plucked up by the root; and your murdering hand was much fitter to destroy, than to build up.

*You will never form a sect**; this you prophesy yourself, and we accept of your augury. Your own example will prove against you, that Enthusiasm can never hurt our Religion, and that it was not established by Fanaticism.

It is certainly the effect of the latter, (and every body must see it) to advance "that there are errors in the Bible†; that St Paul was a Persecutor by nature; that he had never heard Christ himself‡; that there are some extravagant passages in his writings§; that you are not always of his opinion; and that you will prove, that you are sometimes in the right for not being so||."

St Paul himself declares, that "The Gospel he preached was not according to man; that he had not received it from man, but by the Revelation

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* Let. V. p. 197. † Let. III. p. 112. ‡ Let. I. p. 29.
§ Let. III. p. 117. || Ib. p. 118.

"of *Jesus Christ**" This Apostle was indeed a Persecutor before his conversion; but did he persecute any one after he became an Apostle? I own that *St Paul* was not a *Tolerant* in your principles: I have shewn you, in my Fifth Letter, that *Jesus Christ* himself was not so, any more than any of his Apostles. You cite *St James*†, chosen by his master in person, and who had received from his own mouth the instructions which he transmits to us. Now *St James* doth not tell us, that we are to tolerate those, who are in an error, but that we ought to convert them‡. *St John*, equally chosen, and taught by *Jesus Christ*, *St John*, the Apostle of charity, forbids us to receive into our houses one that teacheth not the doctrine of *Jesus Christ*; he will not even suffer us to salute him§: here then is another Persecutor. *St Peter*, brought up in the same school, paints the false Prophets in the blackest colours, and threatens them with perdition||. The same is the language of all the Apostles.

Thus it is, that you plant the tree anew, by correcting the Bible, and contradicting the Apostles. There was a necessity that you should be censured, in order to discover your true sentiments: you did not speak out so much in *Emilius*: the passionate style of your different Letters is nothing like the soothing and benign style of the *Savoyard Curate*.

Let us come now to the objections, which you continue to make against the proofs of Revelation, and

* Galat. i. 11. † Let. I. p. 29. ‡ James iv. 19.
§ 2 John ii. 10. || 2 Pet. ii.

and against Miracles. This is the post, where you think to triumph: but you are still far from the victory. I will follow your objections in the same order, in which you propose them.

To ground Religion on Facts, is to bring it under the authority of men. "Our Profelytes shall have two rules of Faith, which in reality are only one, viz. Reason and the Gospel. The latter will be more immutable, in proportion as it shall be grounded only on the former, and no ways on any particular Facts, which, standing in need of attestations, bring Religion under the authority of men*."

When the Gospel is to submit to Reason, doth it continue any longer a Rule of Faith? In that case, it is no more than a book like others. "It will be the unchangeable rule of Faith." Are ever the judgments of Reason unchangeable, or were they ever so? In all that multitude of men, who, before and since the publication of the Gospel, have pretended to take Reason for their guide, were there ever two, who agreed in the most essential points? "Too often," said you formerly, "doth Reason deceive us; we have too good a right to except against it†." And now Reason is to be the Interpreter of the Gospel. But if we have a right to except against the Interpreter, of what use will the text of the law be?

"Facts bring Religion under the authority of Men." By submitting the Gospel to Reason, do not you submit it to the authority of men; an

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* Let. I. p. 19.

† Emil. T. III. p. 91.

authority, which you own exceptionable? With regard to which of the two objects, Facts or Dogmas, is the testimony of men more fallible? Is there as great a variety of sentiments among them with regard to a palpable fact, as there is with regard to a speculative question? Are men as apt to doubt of what they see, of what they touch, of what they feel, as they are of what they think they perceive or discover by their meditations? Moreover the proof of the Facts on which the Gospel is grounded, depends not on the veracity of two or three witnesses: I have already told you, that the face of the whole world changed by *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles are our witnesses, and our monuments. Is, grounding the Gospel on these, submitting it to the authority of men? Were I the only man left in the universe, it would be impossible for me to doubt of the existence of *Jesus Christ* and of his Apostles, of their preaching, and of their miracles.

Such is the perpetual contradiction and whimsicalness of your principles! Obligated to demonstrate to yourself the first truths of natural Religion, you began by shutting your eyes against the deceitful lights of Reason to hearken only to the voice of the *inward sentiment**. Now you are for submitting the Gospel itself to that faithless Judge, whom you thought before ought not to be consulted. God gave us the Gospel to correct the errors of Reason, which had gone astray in all men; now, contrary

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to the nature of things, it is Reason that is to correct the Gospel. In this fine system of yours, what prerogative do you allow the Gospel above the *Manual of Epictetus*, or the *Republic of Plato*?

But after all, this is an objection that stands by itself, and was made at random; it is in the Third Letter that you come seriously to the point. There is however something curious to see you set out with laying down principles, which clearly condemn you.

“The heads of men being so variously organized, they cannot be all equally affected by the same arguments, especially in matters of Faith. What appears evident to one, doth not appear even probable to another. One, by his turn of mind, is struck with only one kind of proof; another with a proof of quite a different nature. They may all indeed sometimes agree in the same thing; but it seldom happens that they agree therein from the same reasons*.”

An admirable principle, if we speak of objects of mere speculation; but do “these heads, so variously organized,” ever dispute about sensible Facts, or have they recourse, on such occasions, to arguments? There are no Dissertations written to know if a man be alive, or dead, and ought to be buried: if he be in health, or sick, and wants a Physician: if he hath gotten a good dinner, or is dying of hunger: if a woman just brought to bed, is the mother of her child: if the sun shines
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* Let. III. p. 71.

in the night, or if it be the moon: The TESTIMONY of the SENSES therefore is the yoke, under which positiveness, prejudices, humour, character, interest, and the passions, are forced to bend; and there is no other.

“When therefore,” continue you, “God gives
“to men a Revelation, which all are obliged to
“believe, he must necessarily ground it on such
“proofs as are proper for all, and which conse-
“quently must be as different as the manner of
“seeing things is in those, who are to adopt them.”
Wonderful right! If therefore there be one kind
of proof proper for all, in which there is only one
way of seeing and feeling things, to which all are
equally obliged to yield, it must be that, which
God hath made choice preferably to any other;
now such is the TESTIMONY of the SENSES.

You go on*. “From this way of reasoning,
“which appears to me just and easy, it hath been
“discovered, that God gave to the Mission of his
“Envoys various characters, which rendered this
“Mission easy to be known to all men, the little
“and the great, the wise and the foolish, the
“learned and the ignorant The first, the
“most important, the most certain of these charac-
“ters, is drawn from the nature of the doctrine;
“that is to say, from its utility, its beauty, its
“sanctity, its truth, its profoundness, and from
“all the other qualities, which can announce to men
“the Instructions of the Supreme Wisdom, and
“the

* Let. III. p. 71.

“ the Precepts of the Supreme Goodness. This
 “ character, as I said above, is the most certain,
 “ and the most infallible ; it carries in itself a proof,
 “ which dispenses with the want of every other ;
 “ but it is the least easy to verify. In order to be
 “ sensible of its force, study, reflection, extensive
 “ knowledge, discussions, which are fit only for sages
 “ and men of learning, and such as know how to
 “ reason, are required.”

Nothing can be better than this : and since it is certain that there are very few men in the world well instructed, capable of reasoning, who at the same time are men of study, reflection, replete with knowledge, uprightness of heart, exempt from prejudices, passions, and positiveness ; this proof can, at most, only make impression on about one in a thousand. If this be true with regard to us, how much more is it so among those nations, which are savages, barbarians, stupid, ignorant, reduced to the state of brute beasts, misled, or carried away with prejudices, as they all were, without exception, at the first preaching of the Gospel ? Can we ever believe, that God would give to the Mission of his Envoys, the only character, which, at that time, could be of scarce any use ; which could not unite even two families in the profession of the same Faith ? The belief of a God, Master of the Universe, is undoubtedly a holy, true, useful, profound, salutary doctrine : it is moreover clear and evident : but could it ever unite any two sects of Philosophers ?

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It is surprising, that you have not reckoned in the number of the signs, which characterize a revealed doctrine, the Evidence and Clearness thereof. Can you have changed your opinion with regard to this point? If so, the obscurity of the Dogmas will be no longer an objection against Revelation. There was undoubtedly some secret reason for dropping that character: but the Reader must guess at it. Let us go on hearing you.

“The second character is in that of the persons chosen by God to announce his word. Their Sanctity, their Veracity, their Justice, their pure and spotless Manners, their Virtues inaccessible to the human passions, are, together with the qualities of the Understanding, Reason, Intellect, Knowledge, Prudence, so many respectable indications, the reunion of which, when there is nothing that belies itself, forms a complete proof in their favour, and tells us they are more than men. This is the sign, which soonest strikes good and sincere minds, who see every where the Truth, where they see Justice; and never hear the voice of God, but in the mouth of Virtue. This character hath likewise its certitude; but it is not impossible, but that it may deceive, and it is no prodigy, if an Impostor deceive honest men, or that an honest man deceive himself, hurried away by an holy zeal, which he may take for Inspiration.”

Therefore this character, though true in self, and peculiar to *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles, is not
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the only one to which we are to confine ourselves, nor that which maketh the strongest impression.

You assign for a third character of Envoys of God, "An emanation of the divine power, which
"can interrupt and change the course of nature
"at the will of those, who receive this emanation.
"This character is without contradiction the most
"shining, the most striking, and that which cannot miss being seen: that, which shewing itself
"by a sudden and sensible effect, seems to demand
"the least examination, and discussion. It is for
"this reason, that the common people, who are
"incapable of carrying on a train of reasoning, of
"making observations which require time, and are
"always slaves to the senses, are particularly taken
"with it*." Very well so far; but you add:
"And this it is that renders this character very
"equivocal, as will be hereafter proved." We
will soon examine these pretended proofs.

In the mean time, it is somewhat particular, that the most shining characteristic of Revelation should be the most equivocal, and that which is the most striking, should be also the most deceitful. God must have arranged the organs of our brain very badly, since he hath disposed it to be more susceptible of error, than of truth, and more struck with what proves nothing, than what proves something. But let us see where all this will end.

"And in reality, if it strike those, for whom
"it was designed, what doth it signify, whether

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* Let. III. p. 73.

“it be apparent or real? It is a distinction they
“are not able to make: which shews, that there
“is no certain sign, but that which is taken from
“the doctrine; and that consequently none, but
“those who reason well, can have a solid and sure
“faith. But the divine Goodness accommodates
“itself to the weakness of the vulgar, and conde-
“scends to give them such proofs as may do for
“them.”

Speak out, Sir, and say, that God is a complete cheat, who leads the common people, as they stand in need of being led; that he deceives them, because they are made to be deceived; that he employs falsehood, to make them believe the truth, imposture to inspire them with wisdom, a crime to lead to holiness. God, who knows the value of things, looks on the learned and ignorant in a different light: the latter in his eyes are despicable creatures, who do not deserve to know the truth: a wise, holy, and certain Religion was not made for them: a solid, a sure Faith is reserved for those, *who reason well*: they will go strait to heaven by the road of Truth, and the common people will get thither as they can, by the way of Error. Provided they believe, what doth it signify, whether it be upon real or apparent proofs? “God is
“nevertheless Truth, Justice, Goodness, Sanctity
“itself.” But he is only so for such *as reason well*; with regard to others, he is not scrupulous; he dupes them, and makes fools of them, for their greater good. This is truly a miraculous system! Formerly man made Gods to his own image and
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likeness; it is still the same now. But let us stifle all reflections; they would only be insulting.

'Tis true indeed, that *Jesus Christ* thought somewhat different. He gives thanks to his Father "for concealing the truth from the wise and the prudent, to reveal it to little ones, and the ignorant*." He declares to his Disciples, "that unless they become like little children, they shall not enter the kingdom of heaven†." *St Paul*, animated with the same spirit, is continually repeating that "God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world, that he will reprobate the false wisdom of the learned, that he hath chosen the weak and ignorant to confound the wise and strong‡" See here *those who reason well* pretty roughly handled. But you are not of *St Paul's* sentiments§: what *Jesus Christ* says, is perhaps a fault crept into the text; it is not demonstrated, that there have been no alterations made in the Gospel||.

"Provided," say you, "the Doctrine be admitted, there is nothing more needless than to dispute about the number and choice of the proofs: if I am convinced by any one, it is lost labour to want to make me adopt any others¶." The meaning of this in plain language is: "The Morality of the Gospel is excellent; my Reason adopts it; I stand in no need of any farther Revelation. Whether it comes from God, or from the Devil; from Heaven or Hell; let the author of it be a Saint, or an

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* Mat. xi. 25. † Ib. xv. 3. ‡ 1 Cor. i. 19, 20, 27.
§ Let. III. p. 118. || Let. I. p. 24. ¶ Let. III. p. 74

“ Impostor ; a man of sense, or a Visionary ; a
 “ Worker of Miracles, or a Quack ; what is it to
 “ me ? Provided I practise this Morality, I want
 “ no farther belief ; I am Christian good enough.”
 Such, Sir, is your system, when stript of the false
 covering of mere froth, under which you wanted
 to conceal it.

You complain nevertheless, that your enemies ac-
 cuse you of not believing Revelation, because you
 do not believe Miracles. “ But to make that a
 “ just consequence,” answer you, “ one of these
 “ two things must be admitted : viz. either that Mi-
 “ racles are the only proof of Revelation ; or that
 “ I equally reject all the other proofs, which attest
 “ it. Now it is not true, that Miracles are the only
 “ proof of Revelation, nor is it true that I reject
 “ the other proofs ; since, on the contrary, they are
 “ found established in the very work, in which I
 “ am accused of destroying Revelation*.”

In the first place you are in the wrong for making
 use of the expression, *the other proofs* : you had
 just before told us, that “ there was no truly certain
 “ sign of Revelation, but that which is drawn from
 “ the doctrine itself†.” This therefore is the only
 proof you admit of.

Secondly, you moreover use all your endeavours
 to make us doubt of this only proof. After having
 owned the excellency of the Morality of the Gospel,
 you add : “ And yet with all this, the same Gospel
 “ is full of things incredible, repugnant to reason,
 “ and

* Let. III. p. 75.

† Ib. p. 73.

“and such as men of sense can neither conceive, or admit of*.” Can such a mixture of absurdities and excellencies come from God? Can a man, capable of teaching, at the same time, an excellent system of Morality, and Dogmas repugnant to reason, be the Envoy of God?

Thirdly, it is true that you have done homage to the Sanctity of *Jesus Christ*: but you now make us take notice, that this characteristic is deceitful. “It is not impossible,” say you, “but that an honest man may impose on himself, when carried away by the ardour of a holy zeal, which he takes for inspiration†.” You have elsewhere pretty clearly insinuated, that the brain of *Jesus Christ* might be turned‡. If therefore it be true, that the proofs of Revelation are found established in the very work, wherein you are accused of destroying them; it is no less true, that these proofs are attacked in the same and the following works; and that what seems to be affirmed in one passage, is denied in another.

From hence your enemies form this simple and plain argument. If M. *Rousseau* believes in Revelation, why doth he attack the proofs thereof one after another? If he doubts of it, why would he persuade us, that he admits of it purely and simply? When you have answered this dilemma in a satisfactory manner, you may then go on with your invectives against your persecutors, as long as you please.

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* Emil. T. iii. p. 168. † Let. III. p. 73. ‡ Let. p. 84.

As for us, Sir, our thoughts are more simple, and our words more clear. We say, that the three proofs of Revelation, which you have very well distinguished one from another, all meet in *Jesus Christ*; that they are not to be separated, because they mutually strengthen each other, and their re-union forms a sovereign degree of conviction. We maintain that the doctrine of this divine Master can come only from God, because men never taught any so sublime, so pure, so irreprehensible: that the incomprehensibility of the doctrinal points taught by him, is not a sufficient motive for doubting of them; because God can reveal to us; and we are obliged to believe things, which we cannot comprehend. We affirm the Wisdom of *Jesus Christ* to have been as perfect, as his sanctity was eminent; and that God could not suffer, that a Master, who appeared so wise, should be a Visionary or an Impostor: that otherwise he would have laid the most inevitable snares for such as had the greatest goodness and rectitude of heart. We assert that the miracles of *Jesus Christ* can neither be prestiges nor impostures, because they are works evidently supernatural, and acts of virtue, mercy, and charity: that God could not suffer them to be wrought to confirm a false doctrine; because by that means he would have rendered error and seduction inevitable. We conclude, that it was not only the Intention of God to submit great Wits to the Gospel by the sublimity of its doctrine; good and virtuous hearts by the sanctity of its examples and its morality; the simple

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ple and the ignorant by the evidence of its miracles; but that his intention was to make all yield thereto by the re-union of these three proofs: that to prefer one before another, is acting contrary to the designs of God: that to attack a single one of them, is to weaken all the rest, and to afford lawful grounds for being suspected of Incredulity.

With a Profession of Faith so clear, we fear no calumny: if yours had been equally sincere, it is to be presumed, that some regard would have been paid to it. We will refer your objections against Miracles to the following Letter.

I am, Sir, &c.

END of the ELEVENTH LETTER.



L E T T E R XII.

M. Rousseau's Objections *against Miracles examined and answered.*

S I R,

THE Objections you start against *Miracles*, are reduced to two heads. You undertake to prove first, that *Miracles* are not a sign necessary to establish Faith. Secondly, that they are not an infallible sign, and such a one as men can judge of. The greater part of your objections are taken from *Spinoza*, and have been refuted a hundred times. Those you have added of your own, scarce deserve an answer. However I will pass over none of them, even at the risk of repeating the same thing over again, that I may leave no room for any reproach or suspicion.

“Miracles,” say you, “are a proof, which
 “*Jesus Christ* not only never gave, but which he
 “expressly refused to give. He did not announce
 “himself at first by *Miracles*; but by preaching.
 “..... He had already gathered together several
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“disciples, without performing any Miracle to gain credit with them: since it is said, that the first Miracle he performed was that at *Cana**.” Let us suppose for a moment, that *Jesus Christ* performed no Miracles before he began to preach: was there a necessity of his performing any? Was it not enough that he did perform some, when he began to preach? Now the Gospel relates, at one and the same time, the beginning of his preaching, and the beginning of his Miracles. In *St Matthew*, ch. iv. v. 17, it is said, that *Jesus began to preach*; and in v. 24th, that *they brought to him all sick people . . and he healed them*. Secondly, the fact itself is false: for Miracles had preceded his preaching. The birth of *Jesus Christ* published by the Angels; announced to the *Magians* by an extraordinary star; the Heavens opening, when he was baptized by *John*: the descent of the Holy Ghost in shape of a dove: a voice from heaven declaring *Jesus Christ* to be the Son of God; were not all these so many Prodigies or Miracles†?

It was at *Cana* indeed that he performed his first Miracle; but it is uncertain whether he had then begun to preach. It would have been only fair in you to have mentioned what the Evangelist adds: *This beginning of Miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee; and he manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him*‡. What doth manifesting his glory signify, but shewing his dignity of Son of God, and his Mission? What is the meaning

* Let. III. p. 75. † Mat. iii. 16. ‡ John ii. 11.

ing of these words; *and his disciples believed in him*, but that this Miracle strengthened and confirmed their Faith?

It is advancing a falsity to assert that *Jesus Christ* began his functions in the temple at the age of twelve years*; no one was allowed to teach among the *Jews* till he was thirty years of age, and *Jesus Christ* was pleased to submit to this law. To put questions to the Doctors; to astonish them by the wisdom of his answers, was not teaching like a master, nor was it preaching.

“He was already,” continue you, “far advanced in his career, when the Doctors seeing him in good earnest act the Prophet in the midst of them, took it into their heads to ask a sign of him . . . he answered them: *A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign: and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the Prophet*†. And he turned his back on them, and went away.”

Let us take notice of the circumstances that accompanied what you cite. “He was already far advanced in his career;” consequently they must have seen a great number of Miracles, when they came to ask him for a fresh one. *Jesus* refused to shew them one, because he knew that it would make no more impression on that *wicked and adulterous generation*, than the others had done. He refused therefore, in this particular circumstance, to shew the *Jews* any new Miracle, because he had, on other

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* Let. III. p. 76. † Mat. xvi. 4.

occasions, granted them Miracles without convincing them thereby. When they were scandalized at what he had said to the Paralytic: *Thy sins are forgiven thee*: *Jesus* answered, *but that you may know, that the son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins*; arise, saith he to the man sick of the palsy, *take up thy bed, and go into thy house*. And he arose, and went into his house*. This passage alone refutes all your objections.

Your comment on the words of the Gospel is worthy of notice. "They will ask me, what therefore is this sign of *Jonas*? I will answer, that it was his preaching to the *Ninivites*, precisely the same sign *Jesus* made use of to the *Jews*, as he himself explains it†." Let us see, if it be thus *Jesus* explains it: this is what he adds: *For as Jonas was in the whale's belly three days and three nights, so shall the son of man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights‡*. It is clear that *Jesus Christ* here speaks of his abode, part of three days and three nights, in the sepulchre, which was to be followed by his resurrection from the dead; and that consequently he refers the *Jews* to that evident miracle. "I deny it," say you; "*Jesus* at most speaks only of his death; but the death of a man is no miracle." Undoubtedly it is not: but for the same reason, neither is the preaching of *Jonas*, or that of *Jesus* any more so. He doth not therefore refer the *Jews* to this preaching. "It is not even a miracle,"

* Matt. ix. 6. † Let. III. p. 78. ‡ Matt. xii. 40.

"cle," say you, "for a body to be three days under ground, and then to be taken up." No certainly, if it be taken up dead. But if it came out alive, in the manner *Jonas* did out of the whale's belly, or as *Jesus* came out of his sepulchre, would there be no miracle in the case then? "There is not a word about the Resurrection in this passage." The word indeed is not there, but the thing itself is so clear, that a man must wilfully shut his eyes not to see it. "What kind of a proof would it be, for a man to claim authority to himself during his life, on account of a sign that is not to take place till after his death? . . . As such a conduct would be unjust, this interpretation would be impious." There is neither injustice, nor impiety in the case. *Jesus* was speaking to the Scribes and Pharisees, who accused him of driving out Devils by the power of *Beelzebub*, the Prince of Devils; and who, after this calumny, had still the impudence to ask of him a sign or miracle*. *Jesus* declares that no other sign shall be given them hereafter, than that of his burial, which should be like that of *Jonas*. Where is the injustice here? Where is the contradiction between this answer, and what went before it?

But I rather suspect something here, Sir, and it appears to me, that the very idea of a Resurrection gives you some uneasiness, especially when that of *Jesus Christ* is the point in question: among all
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* Matt. xii. 24—32.

your objections against miracles, throughout all your works, there is not a single word about that important fact. There is something surprising in this silence.

The conclusion of your Comment is curious. "After all, be this as it may, it is still proved, "by the testimony of *Jesus Christ* himself, that "if he ever performed any miracles during his "life-time, he never performed any in testimony "of his Mission*." We have just seen in the Gospel how well that is proved. But to render the falsity of that assertion still more palpable, it will be proper to bring together some other passages.

Two of the Disciples of *John* come in their Master's name to *Jesus*, and put this question to him: *Art thou he that art to come; or look we for another?* This was expressly asking of him a proof of his Mission; what answer did he give them? *And that same hour he cured many of their diseases, and . . . to many that were blind he gave sight. And answering he said to them, who had been sent: Go and relate to John, what you have heard and seen: the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, to the poor the Gospel is preached†.* Such was his answer: and yet we are boldly told, that *Jesus* never performed any miracles to prove his mission!

The Jews therefore gathered about him, and said to him: how long doth thou hold our souls in suspense? If thou be the Christ tell us plainly. Here
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* Let. III. p. 79.

† Luke vii. 19, &c.

certainly was an opportunity offered to prove his Mission. *Jesus answered them: I speak to you, and you believe not: the works that I do in the name of my Father, they give testimony of me**. You will be pleased to remember, that here *Jesus* alludes particularly to the cure of the man born blind, related in the preceding chapter, and which had made a great noise among the *Jews*: and concerning which they had taken the most exact informations. *If I do not the works of my Father, continues he, believe me not. But if I do, though you will not believe me, believe the works†. If I had not done among them, saith he in another place‡, the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen them, and hated both me and my Father.* It was thus the miracles of *Jesus Christ* were never wrought to prove his Mission!

However formal and express these passages may be to others, they are not yet sufficiently so for me. I will give the reader the satisfaction of seeing you contradicted by *Jesus Christ* in express terms. The fact I allude to, is the Resurrection of *Lazarus*, the greatest, the most striking, the most incontestable of all the miracles of *Jesus Christ*. You know with what a shew it was performed, in the presence of the whole family of the deceased, of the Disciples of our Saviour, and of the chiefs of the *Jews* in *Jerusalem*. You will soon afford us an opportunity of examining all the circumstances

* John x. 24. † Ib. x. 37, 38. ‡ Ib. xv. 24.

stances of it. The point at present is only to know the intention and motive of it : and *Jesus Christ* himself shall inform us what they were. When the stone was taken away, which covered the sepulchre, *Jesus, lifting up his eyes, said: Father, I give thee thanks for that thou hast heard me: And I knew that thou hearest me always, but because of the people, who stand about, have I said it; that they may believe that THOU HAST SENT ME**. He then calls the dead man by his name, and restores him to life. He had already said to his Disciples, when he told them of the death of *Lazarus* : *I am glad for your sakes, that I was not there, that you may believe†*.

On one hand *Jesus Christ* gives thanks to his Father for the Miracle he was going to perform, because of the people who were about him, that they might believe in his Mission : on the other hand, *John-James Rousseau* repeatedly assures us, and obstinately stands to it, that *Jesus Christ* never did perform any Miracle in proof of his Mission : which of the two ought we believe ?

I omit some other passages for the present, but we shall soon see them ; I have even dwelt too long on a point, which you alone could pretend to doubt of. I will leave you to repeat as often as you please, that “ the Miracles of *Jesus Christ* were
 “ rather acts of Charity than proofs of his Mission ;
 “ that he performed them on particular occasions :
 “ that the choice he made of such as he performed,
 “ announced nothing of a public testimony : that
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* John xi. 41, 41. † Ib. xi. 15.

“the end he proposed in performing them, was so far from that of manifesting his power, that he never was asked to perform one for that end, but he refused to do it.” The contrary is demonstrated; and that is enough.

“Whenever the *Jews*,” say you, “insisted on this kind of proof, he always sent them away with contempt, without condescending to grant their request*.” I have shewn the contrary to this again in the instance of the cure of the Paralytic, which he performed expressly to shew the *Jews* that he had power to forgive sins.

According to you, “He did not even approve that his works of charity should be taken in that sense: *Unless you see signs and wonders, you do not believe*, said he to the man, who desired him to cure his son. Doth any one speak in that manner, when he designs to give his miracles as proofs of his Mission?” Yes, a man may speak in that manner to people, who unaffected by a great number of prodigies already performed, continue still to demand others. *Jesus Christ* spoke in that manner to those, whose inward sentiments he knew; as also, that they would make no better use of a new miracle, than they had done of the preceding ones. He spoke in that manner to such, whose interested ambition was for having miracles performed for themselves in particular, and who always doubted of his power, unless they experienced the effects of it in their own

* Let. III. p. 79.

own persons. He spoke in that manner, and still more harshly, to curious and proud censurers, who would needs be arbiters of the use he was to make of his power; who demanded a miracle from heaven, when they had seen several on the earth; and who after this, would still have required another. In a word, he spoke in that manner to the multitude of *Roussaus*, by whom he was surrounded, who were blind to his prodigies, who calumniated him, and conspired against him, while they pretended to honour him.

You urge furthermore: "How surprising was it, if he had given any proofs of this kind, that they should still be perpetually demanding others of him? *What miracle dost thou perform*, said the *Jews* to him, *to the end, that having seen it, we may believe in thee.* Moses gave Manna to our Fathers in the desert; but what work dost thou do?" This is, as if a person were to ask the King of *Prussia* what he hath done to get the name of a great General. "But is the impudence of such language conceivable, and can we find all over the earth, a single person capable of making such a speech*?"

This is an instance of a new kind of charity. You choose rather to suppose, that the Evangelists are Visionaries, or Liars, than that the *Jews* were impudent. You alone entertain any doubt with regard to this point; you have your reasons for it: but your doubt itself turns to a proof against you.

O 2

Your

Your example convinces us, that there may be still found a man on earth capable of imitating the obstinacy of the *Jews*, and of denying the most incontestable facts, through an attachment to a system. As from hence forward your cause and theirs is the same, you are going to become their Apologist. "The *Jews* demanded a sign from Heaven. "According to their system, they were in the right. "The sign, that was to prove the coming of the "*Messiah*, could not, with respect to them, be too "evident, too decisive, too far beyond the reach "of all suspicion, nor have too many eye-witnesses. "As the immediate testimony of God is always "preferable to that of man, it was safer to believe "the sign itself, than those who said they had seen "it; and in order to this Heaven was preferable "to the Earth*."

You will give me leave, Sir, to maintain that the Earth was preferable to Heaven. "A sign from Heaven would have been taken by the obstinate *Jews* for a natural *Phenomenon*; and if the Gospel had mentioned one of that kind, you would have been the first to have attributed it, right or wrong, to some physical cause. A sign from heaven would have been a miracle of pure ostentation; but *Jesus Christ* would have those he wrought, acts of charity. The Heavens opened at the baptism of *Jesus*, a voice from heaven heard by all present, were a sign from heaven; but the *Jews* paid no more regard to it, than they did to all the others.

But,

* Let. III. p. 81.

But, pray Sir, what is the meaning of your axiom : " That the immediate testimony of God is " always preferable to that of man." When *Jesus* cured the Paralytic, and raised *Lazarus* to life, in the sight of the *Jews*, was not that an immediate testimony of God ? And was there then any need of the testimony of man ? Will you maintain that, not to have recourse to this latter testimony, *Jesus Christ* was obliged to repeat his Miracles, as often as there were *Jews* to be converted, that they might be all eye-witnesses of them ? " The sign " that was to prove the coming of the *Messiah*, " could not be too evident, too decisive, too far " beyond the reach of all suspicion." But could the Miracles of *Jesus Christ* be more evident, more decisive, or more exempt from suspicion, than they really were ? Add to all this the Prophecies, which the *Jews* credited, and the accomplishment of which appeared to them to be at hand, at the time that *Jesus* appeared among them. Add moreover the testimony of *John the Baptist*, whom the *Jews* looked upon as a Prophet. Add lastly the eminent sanctity of our Saviour, to which however the *Jews* never did justice ; and then tell us, if people determined to stand out against so many proofs, were still in the right according to their principles.

But here is another objection. "Jesus says, in the words of the Prophet, that the kingdom of heaven doth not come with external shew; that he who publishes it, enters into no dispute about it; that he doth not cry out; that his voice is not heard in the streets. All this savours no thing

“ thing of the ostentation of performing Miracles :
 “ nor was that the end proposed in his.” Most as-
 suredly it was not : but it is one thing to prove his
 doctrine by Miracles, and another to make a parade
 or shew of them : I have proved to you, that with-
 out any ostentation, *Jesus Christ* gave his works for a
 proof of his Mission.

You pretend that “ he neither gave them the
 “ splendor nor authenticity necessary to ascertain
 “ them for true signs, because he did not give
 “ them as such.” That is false : could greater
 splendor or authenticity be used, than what was
 used at the resurrection of *Lazarus* ; when he mul-
 tiplied the loaves ; when he cured the Paralytic,
 and on so many other occasions ? He performed Mi-
 racles both in the towns, and in the country ; in
 the market places, and on the high roads ; in the
 temple, and in private houses. All indeed were
 not equally public ; but was it any way necessary
 that they should be so ? He who was not converted
 by one single Miracle, well ascertained, would not
 have been converted by a thousand others.

“ On the contrary,” continue you, “ he en-
 “ joined secrecy to the sick he cured, to the lame
 “ he made to walk, to the possessed he delivered
 “ from the Devil ; one would have said, that he
 “ was afraid that his miraculous power should be
 “ known ; it will be owned, that this was a strange
 “ way of making his Miracles the proof of his
 “ Mission.”

You

You shew very plainly that *Jesus Christ* did not make a parade of his Miracles, or perform them only to astonish the people; that he did not make a proof of them, when a proof was out of the question: but you leave us far short of what you first advanced, viz. that *Jesus Christ* never alledged his Miracles as a proof of his Mission.

Let us go on. "*He that rejects me*, said he, "*bath one who judgeth him*. But did he add; the "*Miracles I perform will condemn him*? No; but "*the word I have spoken will condemn him*. The "*proof therefore is in the words, and not in the "*Miracles*." Let us compare this passage, and that which I have cited above, and the solution will be clear and evident. *If I had not done amongst them the works, which no other bath done, they would not have sin*. Consequently, it was not the word alone, divested of proofs, which was to condemn the *Jews*; but the word authorized by Miracles, and the other marks of the Mission of *Jesus Christ*.*

How, in your system, could the word of *Jesus Christ* alone condemn the *Jews*? The word of *Jesus Christ* is the Gospel. But you have told us, "that it is full of things incredible, repugnant to "*reason, and which no man of sense can conceive, or admit of*." Could the *Jews* be condemned for not believing "*things repugnant to "*reason*," for not admitting "*what no man of "*sense could conceive, or admit of*," especially if**

if they were not confirmed by any exterior proof. Were the *Jews* to blame for remaining in a state of scepticism with the *Savoyard Curate*? *Jesus Christ* nevertheless condemned the incredulous *Jews*, consequently both the Curate and you are involved in their condemnation.

According to you, "We see, in the Gospel, that
 "the miracles of *Jesus* were all useful; but they
 "were all performed without noise, without shew,
 "without pomp; they were simple like his dis-
 "course, his life, and the whole tenor of his con-
 "duct. The most apparent, the most palpable
 "of all, was indisputable the multiplication of the
 "five loaves, and of the two fishes, with which
 "he fed five thousand persons. His disciples had
 "not only seen the miracle, but it had passed, as
 "I may say, through their hands: and yet they
 "did not so much as think of such a thing, or
 "even scarce suspected it. Can you conceive,
 "that an action intended as a manifest token to
 "mankind in all ages, should be so little attended
 "to by the most immediate eye-witnesses of it*."

Let us suppose for a moment (though it be false) that the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves was not expressly performed to prove the Mission of *Jesus Christ*; doth it follow that he performed no others with that marked intention? To enable us to judge of the intention of *Jesus Christ* in performing his miracles, was it necessary that, on occasion of each miracle, he should declare in express terms,

terms, that he performed it to bear testimony to his Mission? The intention of *Jefus Christ* in the multiplication of the loaves is sufficiently expressed by the effect this miracle had on those thousands of people, who had been filled: *The men*, says the Gospel, *having seen the miracle which Jefus had done, cried out: this is truly the Prophet, who is to come into the world**, that is to say, the *Messiah*.

But the Disciples forgot this miracle on an occasion, when they ought to have recalled it to mind! What doth that prove? "It is said," according to your own remark, "that it was "on account of their dulness of heart; but," add you, "who dare boast of a heart more intelligent "in holy things, than the chosen disciples of *Jefus Christ*?" You yourself boast of it, Sir, and in a very indecent manner. You declare you are not of *St. Paul's* opinion†: you every moment give the lie to the Evangelists; you attribute what they say to their ignorance, to their want of learning, to their prejudice‡. "So far," say you, "was the "real design of the miracles of *Jefus Christ* from "establishing faith, that on the contrary he began "by requiring faith, before he would perform a miracle. Nothing occurs so frequently "in the Gospel. It is precisely for this reason "alone; it is because a Prophet is not honoured "in his own country, that he performed so few in "his; it is even said, that he could not perform "any

* John vi. 14.

† III. Let. p. 118.

‡ Ib. p. 98.

“any because of their incredulity. How so? If his
 “miracles had been designed as a proof of his
 “Mission, their very incredulity ought to have en-
 “gaged him to perform them; but that was not
 “the design of them.”

The contrary is proved. *Jesus* required a be-
 ginning of Faith in such as demanded any miracles;
 or rather he required a confidence in his power.
 When he saw in them a fund of incredulity, he re-
 fused to perform any, because he was unwilling his
 miracles should be useless. This is what the Gos-
 pel attests. It was the will of *Jesus*, that his
 Miracles should be at one and the same time,
 works of charity, a recompense of confidence, and
 a proof of his Mission. Of this nature were all his
 Miracles. One of these characters do not destroy
 the others: to prove that one agrees to the mira-
 cles of the Saviour, is not to exclude the others.

What therefore you add, is to no purpose; viz.
 “that they were simply acts of Goodness, Charity,
 “and Beneficence, which he performed in favour
 “of his friends, and of such as believed in him;
 “and that it was in such acts as these, that those
 “works of mercy, truly worthy of himself, con-
 “sisted, which, he said, bore testimony of him.
 “These works rather shewed his power of doing
 “good, than any desire of striking the people
 “with astonishment; they were rather *Virtues*,
 “than *Miracles*.”

You sport with the term *Virtue*, when you pre-
 tend that it rather signifies *good works*, than an *act*
of power. Will you deny that *Virtue* in its most
 natural

natural signification expresses *strength, power, ability*? I will undertake to prove by upwards of forty passages, that such is the usual signification of it in the Gospel. I shall only instance two, which are decisive. *Many, says Jesus Christ, will say to me . . . Lord, Lord, have not we prophesied in thy name, and cast out Devils in thy name, and done many wonderful works (multas virtutes, many virtues) in thy name? And then will I profess unto them: I never knew you: depart from me, you who work iniquity**. Are they *Virtues* or *good works* that are spoken of here? *Behold I have given you power to tread upon serpents, and scorpions, and upon all the power (virtutem, virtue) of the enemy†*. Doth this signify *Virtue* and *good works*?

I have already agreed with you, that the *Miracles* of the Saviour were at the same time acts of charity, and acts of power: that one of these characteristics doth not the exclude the other, but on the contrary, that the one confirms the other. The question is, when we examine them separately, which of the two was the best calculated to convince the *Jews* of the Mission of *Jesus Christ*, and to which of the two *Jesus Christ* was desirous that the *Jews* should pay the most attention. I maintain it was to the second, and I will soon prove it from your own words, and those of *Jesus Christ* himself.

You have told us, *that the sanctity of life in an Envoy of God is what in a particular manner strikes the good and well disposed, but that it is not impossible*
to

* Mat. vii. 22. † Luke x. 19.

*to be deceived by that mark**. Now were the greatest part of the *Jews* such good and well-disposed people? Ought they to have relied principally on a mark, which, according to you, might deceive them?

When *Jesus* offered to convince the *Jews* of his Mission by the cure of the Paralytic, he did not say: "this is to shew you that the Son of man hath the *charity to forgive sin*;" but "to shew you that he hath the power." Throughout the Gospel the works of *Jesus Christ* are announced under the names of *might, power, signs, miracles, prodigies, or wonders*, and scarce ever under the names of *charity, sanctity, or good works*: are we to imagine that the Evangelists spoke in a manner directly contrary to the nature of things, and the intention of *Jesus Christ*.

The following objection is a master-piece. "How could the Supreme Wisdom employ means so contrary to the end it proposed to itself? How could it not foresee, that the Miracles, on which it grounded the authority of its Envoys, would produce a quite opposite effect, viz. that they would render suspected the truth of the history both with regard to the Miracles, and the Mission of the Envoys; and that, with so many solid proofs, this last joined to them, would make it less easy to convince men of learning and sincerity of the solidity of all the rest? Yes, I will maintain it, that what they want to ground faith on, is

* Let. III. p. 72.

“ is the greatest obstacle to its being embraced.
 “ Clear the Gospel of Miracles, and the whole
 “ earth is at the feet of *Jesus Christ**.”

Without reading this long-winded piece, it were impossible to see the lengths to which positiveness can carry a great genius. The whole of it is a contradiction to yourself, to the nature of things, and to historical truth.

First it is a contradiction to yourself. You have told us, that of the three characters, with which Revelation may be invested, miracles *are the most striking*, and that which particularly *affects the common people*†. That when the goodness of God makes use of miracles, *it condescends to the weakness of the vulgar, and is willing to give them proofs adapted to their capacity*. Here you say, the supreme wisdom, in making its Envoys perform miracles, *would have employed means contrary to the end it proposed to itself*. Is it possible a man should contradict himself thus in the space of twelve pages?

Secondly, it is a contradiction to the nature of things. The far greater number of people to be converted, especially among unbelieving nations, are a set of ignorant creatures; there is not one in a thousand, whose mind hath been improved. Though it were as true as it is false, that miracles were capable of rendering suspected the history, the doctrine, the Mission of the Envoys to men of understanding, would it become the divine Wisdom to sacrifice the conversion and

salvation of a thousand, to the fear of scandalizing an individual? The divine Wisdom foresaw this scandal of these pretended men of understanding; it hath foretold it. *For judgment I am come into the world, said Jesus Christ, that they that see not, may see; and they that see, may become blind**. I leave the application of the text to you.

Thirdly, it contradicts historical truth. The Evangelists assure us, that they were the miracles which drew followers after *Jesus Christ*, and his Apostles: that the miracle at *Gana* attached his disciples to him: that the healing the son of the *Centurion* converted his whole family: that the multiplication of the loaves made thousands of the people publish aloud that he was the *Messiah*: that the resurrection of *Lazarus* brought over several of the heads of the *Jews*: that the gift of tongues caused several thousands to become Christians at the first preaching of *St. Peter*. There is scarce a miracle, on the occasion of which the same remark is not made. *Clear the Gospel of miracles, and the whole earth is at the feet of Jesus Christ*, say you. May I presume to ask you, what motive can ever bring them thither? I say on the contrary: "Clear the Gospel of miracles, there will not be, "on the face of the earth, a single disciple of *Jesus Christ*."

You carry this wonderful thought still farther; and indeed it would have been a pity to have stopped in so fine a road. You pretend that you do
Jesus

* John ix. 39.

Jesus Christ a favour to believe in him notwithstanding the scandal of his miracles. "I do not well know," say you in a note, "what these good fashionable Christians think in their hearts; but if they believe in *Jesus Christ* on account of his miracles, I believe in him in spite of his miracles; and I have a notion that my faith is better than theirs*." It is indisputably so; it hath all the merit of singularity, and is the only one of its kind in the universe. To believe in *Jesus Christ* on account of his miracles is the faith of the Vulgar; and ought a sublime genius to think like those, who have nothing but common good sense? We ought to have nothing in common with the people, not even Religion. Can you consent at least to be in heaven with us?

You are sensible, however, that the passages of the Gospel, which you abuse, are not very conclusive; and you wanted to be beforehand with the objection. "Let us grant," say you, "that other passages present a contrary sense to these; but these also present a contrary sense to them. In that case I make use of my own right, and choose that sense, which appears to me the most rational and the clearest." I have shewn that the passages you cite, prove nothing at all; and will shew it still more evidently, by repeating them again in two words. You objected that *Jesus Christ* performed no Miracles before he began his preaching: but doth that prove that he performed none after he

* Let. III. p. 84.

began to preach? That he sometimes refused to perform Miracles: but doth it follow, that he never consented to perform any? Let his Miracles have been works of charity; were they, for that reason, less works of power? Let *Jesus Christ* have required faith, before he would perform a Miracle; did that hinder his Miracles from confirming faith? Let the *Jews* have often asked him for Miracles; is that a proof that they never had seen any? Let *Jesus Christ* have made no parade of his Miracles; did that make them less useful? Let it be the word, that is to condemn unbelievers; will they be less condemned by the Miracles? Let the Apostles have often forgotten them; did every body else likewise forget them? Such are the proofs, with which you triumph!

I have moreover shewn you, that the passages you cite, cannot be either a solution or explication of those I have alledged; that you cannot even answer them, without formally contradicting the Gospel. This then is the pretended right you challenge, of choosing a sense and meaning directly opposite to that which the text presents, because you are pleased to think it the more rational.

“If I were,” continue you, “so vain as to pretend to explain every thing, I might, like a true Theologian, twist and torture every passage to my meaning: but sincerity will not allow me to give such sophistical interpretations.” Ah! Sir, what else have you been doing all along, but twisting and torturing the Gospel to your own meaning; suppressing whatever made against you; insisting on
what

what proves nothing; and scraping together sophisms instead of proofs? You are not so vain as to pretend to explain every thing; but you are so vain as to contradict every thing: on which side is there most modesty?

Your method of reasoning looks like a jest. "The authority I allow to the Gospel, I allow not to the interpretations of men." Is not therefore your interpretation that of a man? Be so good, Sir, to prove that it is divine.

"To suffer ourselves to be led by another in this case, is," according to you, "to substitute the interpretation in place of the text, and to submit to man, and not to God." Would you be so good as to shew us, how a man testifies his submission to God, when he assumes to himself a right of explaining his word as he thinks proper? What force can any law have, when every individual is left at liberty to understand it in what sense he pleases? Such is the mystery of the Protestant Faith, which we have never yet been able to comprehend.

The second part of your objections will perhaps be more serious. What you undertake to prove is, that Miracles are not an infallible sign, and such a one, as men are capable of judging of.

You set out with defining a Miracle to be *a real and visible exception to the laws of nature**. You own that it would be absurd to doubt, if God can perform Miracles; the only question is, if he is

* Let. III. p. 87.

ever pleased to perform any. You pretend, that to resolve this point, we must read it in the eternal decrees ; for that it is impossible to decide it by facts.

According to you, “ Whether there be any Miracles or no, it is impossible for a wise man to be “ sure, that any particular fact is one†.” Are you sensible of a contradiction here, Sir ? God is powerful enough to perform Miracles ; but he is not sufficiently so to make them known to us as such. He can change, at his pleasure, the order of nature ; but he cannot make us perceive this change. He is master to interrupt the course of the laws which he hath established ; and he cannot render this interruption so sensible to us, as that we may not be mistaken therein. A Miracle is *a sensible change in the order of nature, a real and visible exception to its laws* ; and a Miracle can never be either sensible or visible. Is he a Philosopher, is he a man of sense, who retails such doctrine ?

By your own confession, God can perform Miracles ; he may therefore have reasons for performing some. The eternal Wisdom does nothing without a reason : it may therefore make use of Miracles to inform us of its will. But should we then know its will, if it were impossible to discern surely the sign which God makes use of to excite our attention ? Can he give us an equivocal sign, one that may deceive us, which we are incapable of distinguishing, and thus lay a snare for our ignorance ?

Accord-

† Let. III. p. 100.

According to you, it would be *impiety* to doubt, if God could perform Miracles; but is it not a greater impiety to suppose he can perform any, if they are a sign that necessarily must deceive us?

Hath he ever wrought any? Hath he ever had a will to work any? Say whatever you can, this question must be decided by Facts; it can be decided no other way.

You pretend that it is "a downright sophism, "to employ a moral proof in order to prove Facts "naturally impossible; because, in that case, the "very principle of Credibility, which is grounded "on a natural possibility, is wanting*."

I have shewn, in my third Letter, that it is not a sophism to make use of moral proofs to prove Facts, if those Facts be sensible, and palpable: that although these Facts be naturally impossible, they are no less, for that reason, objects of the senses: that the principle of Credibility is not then wanting, since it is supposed that they did not happen naturally, but by a power superior to nature: that you yourself made use of this principle, when you said that the Facts regarding *Jesus Christ*, were better attested than those regarding *Socrates*†. Your argument will prove, that we are to give no credit to Naturalists, when they make any new discovery, which formerly appeared to us naturally impossible, because, on that occasion, the principle of Credibility was wanting with respect to us.

"If men," say you, "are disposed in like cases
"to

* Let. III p. 38.

† Emil. T. III. p. 168.

“ to admit of this kind of proof in things of mere
 “ Speculation, or in Facts, the truth of which con-
 “ cerns us very little, let us be assured, that they
 “ would be much harder to convince, if the least
 “ temporal interest of theirs were in question. Let
 “ us suppose, for instance, a dead man should come
 “ and demand his estate again of his heirs, affirming
 “ that he was risen from the dead, and requesting
 “ to be admitted to prove it; do you believe, that
 “ there is a single Tribunal on earth, where this
 “ would be granted him*?”

You will give me leave to observe to you, that the cognizance of Miracles is not the object of Civil Tribunals: they would all be in the right to reject the request on the first sight of it; because death breaking all the bands of society, equally extinguishes all right of property. *The dead gives seizure to the living*: this is a maxim in law, which an extraordinary and miraculous case cannot derogate from. Your supposition then proves nothing at all.

But here comes an objection more weighty in appearance. “ Since a Miracle is an exception to the
 “ laws of nature; in order to judge thereof, we
 “ must know these laws: and to form a certain
 “ judgment, we must know them all. For if there
 “ be only one, that we do not know, it may, in
 “ some cases unknown to the spectators, change the
 “ effects of those which are known. He therefore
 “ who pronounces such and such a particular effect
 “ to

* Let. III. p. 89.

“ to be a Miracle, declares, by so doing, that he knows all the laws of nature ; and that he knows this particular effect to be an exception.”

Take notice, if you please, that you are here making use of the same sophism, that the *Materialists* use, to prove that *Thought* may be a property of matter. “ We know not,” say they, “ all the properties of matter : how then can we be certain, that *Thought* cannot be one of these unknown properties ?” We answer, that to affirm matter to be incapable of thought, it suffices to know, that it hath two properties incompatible with thought, viz. Extension and Divisibility. It is surprising, that you, who were sensible of the weakness of this way of reasoning, should reason in the like manner on another subject !

We are not acquainted with every particular law of nature ; but we know one general law, which ensures to us the certitude of those we know not : that is, the Wisdom and Providence of God. We will unfold, if you please, this principle ; it furnishes an answer to the greatest part of your objections.

It is the Wisdom of God, who is the author of moral laws, that answers for the certitude of the general physical laws. For if there were nothing certain in nature ; neither would there be any thing certain in society, in our state of life, in our duties. I am certain, that there is no possible law in nature, by virtue of which a dead man can be restored to life ; because the resurrection of the dead, once become natural, would necessarily change

change the whole order of society. I am no less certain that, by virtue of any physical law, a Virgin cannot become a Mother: because this miracle, once become natural, would overthrow the laws of marriage. If, by an unknown law of nature, but possible to be known, a mere form of words could cure all distempers; should we be obliged to watch so carefully over our own preservation and that of others? If, by another law of nature, a human body could walk upon the water, fly in the air, penetrate other bodies; what could ensure our lives and safety? If the course of the stars could naturally be suspended; what rule should we have for distinguishing seasons, or keeping up any order in society? And so of the rest. The same Wisdom, the same Goodness, the same Providence, whose will it is that I should be certain of my present state, my obligations, my destination, ensure to me the certainty of the laws of nature.

Take notice, I desire, that all the Physical Discoveries, on which you insist so much, strengthen my proof, instead of weakening it. From *Adam* to our times, hath any new law of nature been discovered, which hath introduced any new moral order, or hurt, in any regard, the unchangeable rule of manners?

By a new consequence, when the divine Wisdom resolved to establish a new moral order of things, to impose on me new obligations, to subject me to a new worship; it acted regularly, when it informed me of its will by a momentaneous and striking interruption of those same laws, the course of which

which it never changes, except in this case*. If you would seriously reflect on this principle, you would be more sensible, than another, of the justness thereof, and the consequences, which flow from it. No one appears to be more fully persuaded of the necessity of a moral order: I am under no apprehension that you will ever dispute the certainty of it.

You will object, without doubt, that we have not a sufficiently perfect knowledge of the relation, which subsists between all the laws of nature, and the moral laws, so as to perceive what effect the disordering of such a particular law may have with respect to the rule of manners. Though a man should know, for instance, how to multiply loaves of bread; the inconvenience, that from thence would result to society, is not seen.

In reality, it may sometimes be doubted, whether or no such a particular effect derogates from the laws of nature or the moral laws; but the same general rule of the Wisdom and Goodness of God sufficiently removes our fears. We know in general, that a good and wise God will never allow any man so evident a power over nature, as to appear to dispose thereof in an absolute manner, especially when there is an inevitable danger of seduction thereby. God, who hath given man at the same
time

* N. B. It must not be inferred from hence, that God never doth perform any miracles, but in order to introduce a new worship; but that every time he hath performed any, it was to intimate to man some particular will and intention.

time a very limited knowledge of, and an entire confidence in the laws of nature, will never suffer any impostor or visionary to have power enough to put them into disorder, even only in appearance, so far as to lead men into error.

Take notice again, that this rule is moreover verified by experience. When God sent *Jesus Christ* to instruct mankind, in the first place, he not only gave him a power to derogate from those laws of nature, the certainty of which might be called in question; but even from those, whose connection with the moral order was evident; such is that law, by virtue of which a dead man cannot return to life, &c. Secondly, his Miracles were not only wonderful works or prodigies, but they were also holy works, acts of charity and of virtue. Thirdly, God was pleased that his power should also be accompanied with two other characteristics, the necessity of which you yourself have acknowledged, viz. Purity of Doctrine, and Sanctity of manners. It was for this reason I told you before, that these three characteristics ought never to be separated, because they mutually strengthen each other.

It is therefore to mistake the very principle itself, to consider Miracles only on the side of the laws of nature: no less attention ought to be paid to the influence they may have on manners. "Such
" a particular law of nature doth not appear to be
" any way connected with the order of society:
" therefore God may permit it to be disordered on
" every occasion." The conclusion is false. For God certainly would never permit it, if there were

an inevitable danger of seduction, considering the genius, the learning, and the particular dispositions of such as were witnesses thereof.

With these principles, of which we must never lose sight, there will be no difficulty in answering your objections.

Let us resume your argument: "Since a Miracle
" is an exception to the laws of nature; in order
" to judge thereof, we must know these laws:
" and to form a certain judgment, we must know
" them all. For if there be only one, which we do
" not know, it may, in some cases, unknown to the
" spectators, change the effects of those that are
" known."

I maintain that without knowing all the laws of nature, we are certain that the Miracles of *Jesus Christ* are not the effect of certain particular laws unknown to the spectators. This essential point must be demonstrated.

In the first place, how do we know the laws of nature? By the regularity, the constancy, the uniformity of their course and their effects; there is no other way of knowing them. God undoubtedly established them for the benefit of his creatures; our life, our actions, our behaviour rest on that foundation. If these laws were not constant, uniform, immutable, they never could make us easy, nothing would be certain in the whole world. A passing, momentaneous law, which hath never shewn itself, but once or twice since the creation, without ever appearing again, is not a law; it is rather an exception to the other laws:

it would be making a wrong use of words, and confounding all ideas, to call it otherwise.

Some particular new laws, if you please, have been discovered, such as the Gravity of the Air, the Magnetic Virtue, Electricity; but these shew themselves, like the others, by the constant reproduction of the same effects in the same circumstances. If one or others of these *Phenomena*, had appeared only once at the pleasure of some Naturalist, without ever any one being able to reproduce the same again, should we consider it as the effect of a law of nature?

Now such were the Miracles of *Jesus Christ*, the only *phenomena* of their kind, which he wrought at pleasure, by a single word, and which no one could ever imitate, except those, to whom he communicated a power of doing the same. If there be any such thing, for instance, as a certain and constant law in nature, it is that of the gravitation of bodies. When therefore *Jesus Christ* walked upon the water, and made *St Peter* walk thereon, to maintain that this *phenomenon* might have been the effect of an unknown law of nature, and not an evident exception to the known law of the gravitation of bodies, (which is a natural effect, and not a miracle) is it not sporting with words, and confounding ideas? To say, that, *if there be only one law of nature, which we do not know, it may, in some cases unknown to the spectators, change the effect of those that are known*, is to pretend that an only, and momentaneous exception to the law, is a law.

Secondly, the Miracles of *Jesus Christ* were not wrought at random; they had an end, an appointed purpose. It was the design of God, that they should serve to prove the Mission of his Son, and the establishment of Christianity; for after all, must we say that they produced this effect by chance? Was it by a fortuitous combination of the laws of nature, that *Jesus* was born at the time the *Jews* expected a *Messiah*, whom they believed to be foretold by the Prophets? That *John the Baptist* should appear on the banks of the *Jordan* to publish his coming? That the two branches of the family of *David* should be reunited in him? That he should apply so aptly to himself the well-known prophecies in the books of the *Jews*? That he should preach a doctrine more sublime, and a Morality more pure, than all the teachers in the world? That he should perform works, that looked like prodigies? That he should draw Disciples after him? That these latter should spread the Gospel all over the world? Was it a blind fatality that gathered together this infinite number of circumstances, which forms the so well-connected tissue of the Evangelical History, and all those *characters of truth*, which appear to you *so grand, so striking, so perfectly inimitable*, that all the industry of mankind could never succeed in an attempt to counterfeit? An *Atheist*, a *Materialist*, may say so, and thus expose himself to the laughter of every man of sense: but for you, Sir, who believe a God, and a Providence, who are convinced that the order and perfect correspondence of the

means with the end discover an Intelligence, you certainly will never say it.

It is therefore, according to your principles, the supreme Intelligence, which established all the particular laws, by virtue of which *Jesus* wrought, whenever he pleased, works, which had the appearance of prodigies: it is that, which put them in motion at the precise moment, wherein they were to act at the will of *Jesus*, and from that time made all their influence cease. Now, to suppose that God made particular laws expressly for *Jesus Christ*, and for him alone, laws, which, at his pleasure, suspended the course of the other laws: or to suppose simply, that he gave him the power to suspend all the laws of nature, and work miracles, is not this expressing the same thing in different words? A law made for a single case, and which derogates from all other laws, is it not, according to your own definition, an evident Miracle?

Thirdly, if the prodigies of *Jesus Christ* were only the effects of some unknown law of nature, this divine Master, whose sublime Wisdom, whose heroic Virtues, whose Candour, an enemy to all ostentation, you acknowledge, is, at the bottom, the greatest cheat, and the vilest impostor. He constantly gave out his miracles as an effect of that supernatural power, which he had received from his Father. *All things, says he, are delivered to me by my Father*. All power is given to me in heaven, and on earth†. The Father loveth the Son: and*

* Matt. ii. 27. † Ib. xxviii. 18.

and he hath given all things into his hand. His Father gave him power over all flesh†. All my things, says he to his Father, are thine, and thine are mine‡. The Son cannot do any thing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do . . . As the Father raiseth up the dead, and giveth life : so the Son also giveth life to whom he will, &c§.*

He hath done more ; he was for persuading his Apostles, that they themselves would perform miracles in his name, and that he had given them power to do so. *Amen I say to you, if you have faith . . . You shall say to this mountain : remove from hence to yonder place, and it shall remove : and nothing shall be impossible to you¶. He that believeth in me, the works that I do, he shall do also, and greater than these shall he do||. The seventy-two returned . . . saying : Lord, the Devils also are subject to us in thy name**.* We have cited some similar passages in the third Letter. If the wonderful works of Jesus were the effects of some of the laws of nature, can any thing be more senseless, or more knavish, than such language ? Was not that taking pains purposely to disturb the brain of his Disciples, and to make Fanatics of them ? But it would be abusing the patience of the reader to dwell any longer on this point.

“ No wise man,” say you, “ will ever affirm
“ that a fact, however astonishing it may be, is
“ a miracle ; for how can he know it to be one†† ?

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* John iii. 35. † Ib. xvii. 2. ‡ Ib. xvii. 10. § Ib. v. 19—21. ¶ Matt. xvii. 19. || John xiv. 12.
** Luke x. 17. †† Let. III. p. 89.

The meaning of this is, that a wise man will never affirm it, till after a mature examination: that, in such a case, the greatest circumspection ought to be used; that the judgment to be formed, doth not depend solely on the knowledge of nature; that it ought chiefly to be considered on the side of moral laws. If this be all you mean, no one will gainsay you.

It cannot be denied, but that some very extraordinary things are done; you have seen some; you have done some yourself. "But," add you, "I was content with being a Conjurer, because I was modest: but if I had had the ambition to become a Prophet, what could have prevented me?" The fear of being the dupe thereof, as you certainly would have been.

Nothing is so common, according to you, as operations, which formerly would have been taken for miracles. "The study of nature every day makes new discoveries: human industry every day acquires a new degree of perfection: the curious effects of Chemistry are so wonderful, that they would cause the common people to cross themselves a thousand times. A naturalist, just come from the College, goes to *Guinea* and makes ice; behold the negroes ready to adore him!"

This is all very fine in speculation; but it is not so soon done. Our Missionaries have a thousand times astonished the *Chinese* by Physical Experiments; but they did not make the greater progress in their conversion by that means. If it be possible

to convert all the Negroes, by experimental Philosophy, Chemistry, and the Mathematics, why do not you, who instead of becoming a Prophet, are content with being a Conjuror; you, who are so zealous for the religion of nature, and preach it to so little purpose in *Europe*, why have not you determined to go and instruct the Negroes? With your wonderful secrets, you would convert the whole earth: you would teach those poor brutified wretches the knowledge of God; you would every where establish the *pure Gospel*, of which you look upon yourself to be the Apostle and Martyr. But you are sensible, that something more than mere juggling tricks is required to instruct mankind; that to astonish the intellect, is not to change the heart. When an Infidel is converted, even at the sight of a miracle, the interruption of the laws of nature is not that, which is the most wonderful.

You say, that if the Priests of *Baal* had had *M. Rouelle* among them, their pile of wood had taken fire of itself, and *Eliab* would have been duped. Not at all: the thing to be done was not to make the pile of wood take fire of itself, but to make fire come down from heaven in the sight of all present. This is what *Eliab* did*, and he was neither a Chemist, nor a Naturalist. He had neither the Oil of *Guaiacum*, nor Spirits of *Nitre*, which were then unknown. And that there might be the less doubt of the miracle, he caused a large quantity of water to be poured on the Victim, on the pile of wood, and on the altar.

“ In

* 3 Kings, ch. 18.

“ In days of old,” say you, “ the Prophets brought down fire from heaven ; now-a-days children do the same by means of a little bit of glass*.” You play the fool with your readers. Children, who lighten a few chips, by collecting the rays of the sun in a burning glass, will astonish for a moment the ignorant common people ; but the most stupid among them will not imagine that they bring the fire down from heaven. Burning Glasses were unknown in the time of the Prophets ; and where machines are made use of, the common people are no longer imposed on.

“ *Josbua* stopped the sun ; an Almanac-maker will cause it to be eclipsed ; this latter prodigy “ is still more sensible.” So serious a subject should require less childish objections. The sun under an Eclipse was never reckoned a Miracle among the *Hebrews* : the sun stopped in its course, would be one even among us.

Bring together, as long as you please, the Laboratories of the Naturalists, the Fairs of *Paris*, the tricks of the Convulsionaries, all the arts of *Europe*, you may astonish the people, but you never will bring them under your yoke. It is to no purpose to tell us, “ that the Europeans, with their knowledge in the arts, have always passed “ for Gods among the Barbarians ;” these mighty Gods nevertheless cannot change either their dispositions or their hearts. The Barbarians stare, hear-ken, wonder, and return quietly to their *Pagodas*.

But

But let them have such a Master as *Jesus Christ*, or his Apostles, and they will soon be converted.

“ I know not,” say you, “ if the art of healing “ be yet discovered, or if it ever will ; but this I “ know, that it is not beyond the power of nature. “ It is as natural for a man to grow well, as to fall “ sick ; he may also be cured suddenly, as well as “ die suddenly*.” All this is neither true, nor exact. That a man should recover slowly, and by help of Medicines, is a thing in the ordinary course of nature ; but that he should recover suddenly, and at the pleasure of another, is not so. With a stroke of a hammer a man may dash a watch to pieces, but can he, with a stroke of a hammer, mend it again, without a Miracle ? The organs of the human body are so formed and complicated, that they may easily, and suddenly be put out of order ; but to replace them in their natural state, is quite another thing. If they be disordered to a certain degree, death must naturally ensue : in that case, they cannot be restored to their former state, but by the Almighty Artist, who formed them. This is plain good sense.

If it be true that “ a man may be cured suddenly, “ as well as die suddenly ;” why do not you add, that he may also rise again suddenly ?

You add a corrective : “ There are however, “ I own, some things which would very much “ astonish me, if I were an eye-witness of them. “ It would not astonish me so much to see a lame “ person

“ person walk, as to see a man walk without legs ;
“ or to see a man struck with the palsy move his
“ arm, as to see a man, who had but one arm,
“ have two.” That would undoubtedly astonish
you, but it would not make you change your opi-
nion ; for you are determined never to quit it.
You will by and by own this.

“ This, I confess, would strike me more, than to
“ see a dead man come to life ; for after all, a
“ dead man may not be actually dead.” All the
Naturalists, who have wrote on the signs of death,
are agreed, that there are some so certain, as not
to deceive. The nauseous and disagreeable smell,
which a corpse begins to exhale almost as soon as
it is cold, is not an equivocal sign. In that case
it is false to say, that that dead person may not be
actually dead. What would become of us, if we
could not be certain of the death of a person, till
the living were in danger of being infected by
the dead.

“ After all,” continue you, “ however striking
“ such a sight might be, I would not, for all the
“ world, be an eye-witness of it ; for how do I
“ know what might happen ? Instead of making
“ me a believer, I should very much fear it would
“ make me lose my senses.” This confession is not
useless ; it shews us to what lengths the obstinacy
of systematical people may go. They would sooner
give the lie to their own eyes, and all their senses
united, than depart from their opinions.

Thus, Sir, the truth is come out in spite of
you. You pay it the most solemn homage, while
you

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you pretend not to see it. You acknowledge the terrible impression the sight of a Miracle would make on you; is not this to acknowledge at the same time, the absolute empire of that proof over all minds; and the superior reasons that the divine Wisdom had in making use thereof for the conversion of the world? One or the other must be; either this proof must make men docile, or it must make them lose their senses. You fear the alternative; but take heart; God doth not usually work Miracles in favour of those who are afraid of them.

You refer us to M. *Brubier* to examine the resurrection of *Lazarus*; let us see, if he reasoneth any better than you do. *Lazarus* was already buried. *But would he have been the first man, that ever was buried alive?* He certainly would have been the first man, who staid alive in the grave for four days, after a sickness, and appearing to have died in consequence of a decay of nature. In order to know if a narration be true, none of the circumstances ought either to be suppressed, or altered. He had been in the grave four days. *Who had counted them?* Those who had buried him, and from whom the Disciples of *Jesus* might learn it. This circumstance is twice repeated; first by the Evangelist himself; and then by the sister of the deceased. *It was not Jesus, for he was absent.* *Jesus*, though absent, knew of the death of *Lazarus*, and declared it to his Disciples, adding these remarkable words: *Lazarus is dead; and I am glad for your sakes, that I was not there, that you*
may

*may believe**. He already stunk : *how do you know it ? His sister said so ; and that was all the proof.* No, Sir, that was not all the proof, since the Evangelist was also there present, and the deceased had been buried four days ; less time might have made him infectious. Jesus only called to him, and he came forth. *Take care of false reasoning : the point in question, is a physical impossibility ; but there was no such thing in that case.* How ! is it not a physical impossibility, that a man, who had been four days dead, should raise himself up at the voice of *Jesus* ? This is making fools of us indeed : while the laws of reasoning are all broke through, we are cautioned against false reasoning ! *Jesus used much more ceremony in other cases, that were not more difficult : . . . why this difference, if all were equally miraculous ?* Though we should not be able to alledge any reason for this difference, would that hurt the substance of the miracle ? Whether *Jesus* acted thus to excite the attention of his hearers, to accommodate himself to their genius, to make the fact appear less miraculous, or for other reasons, what doth that concern us ? *This may possibly be an exaggeration ; nor is it the greatest St. John hath made : I appeal to the last Verse of his Gospel* By formally contradicting the historians, by accusing them of exaggeration, by suppressing or disfiguring circumstances, there is nothing but what may be made appear doubtful, or even false. If the method you follow in examining

* John ii. 14, 15.

mining the miracles of *Jesus Christ*, were to be applied to profane history, is there a single event which at this day would pass for certain?

But you come again to your physical conjectures. “There hath lately been discovered a secret, by which persons drowned may be brought to life; and a method hath also been attempted to bring to life, such as have been hanged. Who knows, but that, at last, some means may be found out of restoring to life such, as may seem to be deprived thereof by other kinds of death*?” The secret hath been discovered of recalling to life, such as appeared to be dead, but were not really so; because suffocation had not entirely extinguished in them all natural heat, and consequently the principle of life still remained: but no one will ever think of attempting to discover, or will ever succeed in an attempt to discover, the secret of bringing to life persons dead after languishing under a decay of nature, like *Lazarus*; or such, as have been four days in the grave, and whose cadaverous smell but too evidently attests death.

In a note you reason upon the circumstances of some of the miracles of the Gospel. To cure a blind man *Jesus* employs spittle; and at another time clay. He doth not entirely cure him by the first operation; it must be repeated. “To what purpose was all this in working a miracle? Doth nature dispute with its master? . . . Is it not sufficient, that it is his will that the thing should
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* Let. III. p. 94.

“be so? Or shall we dare to say, that *Jesus* had a mind to shew himself of consequence, and amuse the spectators? Choose which you please*.”

I answer that there is no necessity of choosing at all. Though there should be some things in the conduct of *Jesus Christ*, as well as in his doctrine, which we could not account for, would that be a sufficient reason for calling all the rest in question? Do our adversaries, with all their abilities and superior talents, account for every thing in their different systems? Even in points of natural Religion, in matters which seem dependant on reason alone, they are forced to acknowledge, that there are *difficulties unanswerable common to all systems*†: and in the supposition of a supernatural Revelation, in things that depend on the mere pleasure of God, they are for having every thing placed in such a degree of Evidence, as to be proof even against the Chicanery of a censorious and malignant mind! Where is the justice of such proceeding?

When a man hath given tokens of a wisdom and prudence more than common, we do not begin by condemning those of his actions, of which we do not at first perceive the end or motive; we suppose he had his reasons for acting as he did; and this is no more, than what equity demands. Since, by your own confession, “*Jesus* shewed a wisdom, a disinterestedness, a greatness of soul, a command over his passions, which no other ever came up to‡,” ought we not to presume, that he

* Let. III. p. 98. † Emil. T. iii. p. 30. ‡ Ib. p. 165.

he never acted, but from superior motives, and often imperceptible to the eyes of the vulgar? It is granted, that with regard to doctrine, *Jesus* knew more, than all the rest of mankind put together; and yet, when we come to examine his actions, it is expected that we should know as much as he did!

"Let me have miracles," say you, "that remain such at all times, and in all places. If several of those related in the Bible, appear to be of that nature, others equally appear not to be so. Answer me then, thou Theologian, dost thou insist that I should take them all in the lump, or dost thou permit me to pick and choose? When thou hast determined this point, we shall then see further*."

The point is quite determined; it is at your own option either to take them all in the lump, or to pick and choose. We maintain against you, that all the facts given in the Bible, as Miracles, are really such, and will be such at *all time, and in all places*: that you never will be able to prove them mere natural facts, unless it be by altering the circumstances, giving the lie to the Historian, or supposing exaggerations; all of which are ways, which sincerity will never permit any one to have recourse to. Though you should, by dint of subtilties and chicanery, be able at last to cast a shade on some of them; the multitude, the variety, the continuance, the sanctity of the miracles

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of

* Let. III. p. 96.

of *Jesus Christ* form an assemblage of characters impenetrable to all your darts. In moral proofs, when each one is examined in particular, it may be liable to some contestation; but their re-union produces nevertheless a moral certitude, which often amounts to a metaphysical evidence. Your arguments all depart from this principle, which is that of good sense, and consequently prove nothing.

You desire us to take notice, that while you suppose, at the most, some amplification in the circumstances of the Miracles, you do not entertain any doubt, at bottom, of the reality of any of the facts. "This," add you, "I have said before; and it is not superfluous to repeat it again*." Though you had repeated it a hundred times, the remark had been no more worth. An alteration of, or an amplification in a single circumstance, is enough to change a miraculous fact into one that is purely natural, and consequently to alter essentially the history. When the Evangelists relate that *Jesus Christ* fed five thousand people with five loaves of bread, if it be supposed, that he fed only five men, there is no longer any Miracle in the case: it is the number of people alone that characterizes the Miracle. If *St Peter* went to meet *Jesus Christ*, not by walking on the sea, but by swimming; this circumstance changed, the Miracle disappears. Supposing that *Jesus Christ* cured the blind man either by applying some remedy, or by rubbing his eyes with clay, the fact is essentially different. To suppose therefore in the Evangelists

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an exaggeration in the circumstances of the facts, is to attack the very grounds of their history; it is to accuse them either of downright stupidity, or of having been faithless witnesses: to suspect them of either one or the other, is equally injurious to those great men, and to the divine Master, who made choice of them.

According to you, "*Jesus*, enlightened by the " Spirit of God, was possessed of knowledge so superior to that of his disciples, that it is no wonder, if he did a great many extraordinary things, " which the ignorance of the spectators took for " prodigies, though they really were none. How " far might he not go, by that superior knowledge, " even in acting by natural means unknown to them " and to us? This is what we know not, nor are " we able to know."

It is pretty singular, that you should acknowledge *Jesus* to have been enlightened with the Spirit of God, without agreeing that he had also the power of God: as if it would have been more difficult to have communicated to him the one, than the other, though *Jesus* also hath several times assured us that he had both. Is not the testimony of a Master, so holy and so wise, sufficient to convince us, that he performed all his works by the same spirit, and by the same power, and that he did not act sometimes from natural knowledge, sometimes by a divine power. He declared that he cured the man sick of the palsy by the same power, by which he forgave sins*: that he drove out Devils by the

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finger

• Matt. ix. 6.

finger of God*: that he was going to raise *Lazarus* to life, because his Father had heard him†: he declared, that all power in heaven and on earth was given to him‡: that he had received from his Father power over all flesh§: he not only exercised this power himself, but imparted the same to his Apostles||; he commanded them to make use thereof in his name**: and they assure us, they exercised that power after his example†† Here therefore is no room for illusion. If nothing more be meant by all this, than some mere natural effects, *Jesus* and his Disciples are the greatest cheats in the whole universe: God hath in them exhibited a spectacle to the whole world a thousand times more incomprehensible, than the Miracles themselves.

You renew in a note your complaints against the injustice of your accusers. "Our men of God strongly insist on it, that I have represented "*Jesus* as an Impostor." No undoubtedly, you never have said so in express terms, but you have left us to doubt, if he was not a Fanatic, or if his brain was not turned*. But your way of reasoning here is such, as to make us conclude, that he was an Impostor, who endeavoured on purpose to disturb the brain of his Disciples, and deceive the whole world.

"What therefore are we to think," conclude you, "of so many miracles related by writers, honest, I doubt not, but so stupidly ignorant, and so

* Luke xi. 20. † John xi. 41. ‡ Matt. xviii. 18.
§ John xvii. 2. || Matt. x. 1. ** Ib. v. 9. †† Luke
x. 17. ‡‡ Let. III. p. 84.

“ so zealous for the glory of their master ? Ought
 “ we to reject all the facts related by them ? No.
 “ Ought we to admit of them entirely ? I cannot
 “ tell*.” Let us first of all take notice of a small
 contradiction. In a former passage you supposed
 the Disciples to be *very intelligent in holy things*† ;
 here you exaggerate their stupid ignorance : and
 such is your usual method of proceeding. But
 could their ignorance go so far, as to make them
 believe, that *Jesus* had given them power to drive
 out Devils, and to cure distempers, though there
 were nothing in it : or that they had in reality
 wrought these miracles, although it were not true ?
 This is no longer ignorance ; it is either a total
 loss of reason and complete madness ; or a preme-
 ditated falsehood and knavery.

The Disciples of *Jesus Christ* were ignorant,
 when they first followed him : but in their writ-
 ings, in their preaching, in their success they are
 men of sense, who astonish the whole world.
 Either then *Jesus* must have communicated his own
 wisdom to them ; or he sent down the spirit of
 God on them, as he had promised. Choose which
 you please : in either case you are equally to blame
 for rejecting their testimony.

In a note you pretend, “ that there are some
 “ miracles recorded in the Gospel, which it is im-
 “ possible to take in the literal meaning, without
 “ renouncing common sense. Such are those rela-
 “ ting to the Demoniacs. The Devil is known
 “ by

“by his works, and the truly possessed are the wicked; reason will never acknowledge any others*.” If reason be not sufficiently enlightened to discover any others, the Gospel, which was given us to correct reason, ought to render us more knowing. By rejecting whatever reason alone doth not enable us to conceive in the Gospel, we shall soon reduce it to nothing. It was not worth your while to have shewn so great a respect for it in other places, if you claim a right to judge of it, as you do of any other book.

You endeavour to ridicule the story of the Devils, who, when *Jesus* had driven them out of the body of a man, entered the herd of swine, and went and precipitated themselves into the sea. “Good God!” cry you out, “it makes one dizzy; there is no knowing where one is.” That is not surprising; in the systematical Chaos, which you have formed to yourself, it is hard to know where one is. Sometimes the facts relating to *Jesus Christ* must be considered as the *best attested*†, and at other times, we are formally to contradict the history of them: We are sometimes to consider *Jesus Christ* as the model of sages, and at other times as one whose brain is disturbed: his Disciples are sometimes to be represented as honest writers, and men of veracity, at other times as a parcel of ignorant creatures, whose accounts are shocking to common sense: thus to heap contradiction on contradiction, and never to retract, is more than enough to make any one dizzy. I defy any man
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* Let. III. p. 98. † Emil. T. III. p. 168.

infatuated with your principles to dare read the Gospel, without being tempted twenty times to throw it into the fire. To own, that to take it in its literal sense makes you dizzy, is it not confessing that you have a wrong idea of it?

If you had reflected a little more on the miracle, which scandalizes you, you would perhaps have perceived better both the end and the utility of it. You know that *Judea* was full of *Sadducees*, who denied the existence of Spirits, and consequently of Devils; that they attributed the symptoms of the Demoniacs to madness, hysteric passions, or melancholy, (as the Unbelievers now-a-days do) and that *Jesus Christ* had several times disputes with them on that subject. When the Devils begged of *Jesus*, that they might be permitted to enter the swine, and these were immediately seen to run and precipitate themselves into the sea, this *phenomenon* could not then be attributed to a disordered imagination, or any natural distemper. This miracle alone was enough to confound the *Sadducees*, and it is very probable that such was the intention of our Saviour*. It is a pity that you should be involved in their condemnation.

“The authority of the laws,” add you, “can-
not extend so far, as to make us reason falsely.”
They certainly cannot: but the law and the
word of God may extend their authority so far, as
to

* It is also probable that the intention of our Saviour might be to punish the avarice of the *Gerasens*, who made a trade of selling swine's flesh to the Gentiles, which they could not eat themselves. Tr.

to force us to own that we sometimes reason falsely, even when we think that we reason justly. All reasoning contrary to the law and word of God, must necessarily be false reasoning.

You conclude at last thus: "All this serves
 "to prove, that we are unacquainted with the
 "bounds of possibilities; but a miracle, to be truly
 "such, must go beyond these bounds. Whether
 "therefore there be any such things, as miracles,
 "or not, it is impossible for a wise man to assure
 "himself, that any particular fact whatsoever is
 "really one*."

I have already told you, that we are sufficiently acquainted with the bounds of possibilities, to be certain that a dead man cannot naturally rise again; that an human body cannot penetrate other bodies; that a loaf of rye cannot feed a thousand people, &c: that this certainty is grounded on the most solid foundation, viz. on the wisdom and providence of God, which cannot permit (but for special and extraordinary reasons) events, which would overthrow the order of society, were they frequently to happen, and if we were not forewarned of their destination.

We are convinced that there was, seventeen ages before us, a famous revolution all over the face of the Universe, the causes of which evidently could not be natural. We are therefore obliged to acknowledge that a supernatural force, whatever it be, hath interposed: that mankind was sensible of that
 power,

* Let. III. p. 100.

power, since it produced so great an effect. The author of this revolution is well known; it is *Jesus Christ*. By what prodigies did he strike the minds of men? You have assigned three; viz. the purity of his doctrine, the sanctity of his manners, and the exterior splendor of his works: but which of these made the greatest impression on mankind? This is well known. His doctrine, though pure, was incomprehensible; more fit to make reason revolt, than to subjugate it: his manners were holy, as well as those of his Disciples; but vicious hearts found their own condemnation therein; the Disciples, like their Master, were persecuted, and put to death. Their works appeared supernatural; but their enemies said, they were mere delusions; but delusions and juggling tricks were never works of charity and humanity: Magicians never wrought any, but to do mischief. There was therefore in these works a double characteristic, which struck all upright minds and virtuous hearts. And in fact, history assures us, that it was this that hath gained over followers to *Jesus Christ* in all times, and in all nations.

Was it possible, that God, the Master of all minds, hearts, and events, should have arranged things in such a manner, that what was false, should make a stronger impression, than what was true? That the most holy of all Religions should be chiefly established by that proof, which, in the eyes of men of sense, was to be the most suspected, and the most liable to imposture? This no one can ever believe.

Though

Though we should not be able to answer all your sophisms, you never will be able yourself to answer this argument : " The world was converted by Miracles ; the fact is certain : Miracles therefore are neither impossible, nor useless, nor liable to suspicion, nor so hard to distinguish."

Let us now go on to the last of your objections, but it is high time to begin to shorten them. " Let us grant," say you, " that there are such things as real miracles ; of what use can they be, if there be also false miracles or delusions, which it is impossible to distinguish from the true ones ? " . . . The same authority, which attests these Miracles, attests also the delusions ; and proves moreover, that, to all outward appearance, there is no difference between these delusions or juggling tricks, and real Miracles*." You are wrong in this last point ; for whenever God hath permitted delusions to stand in opposition to true Miracles, he hath always ordered the circumstances so, as might enable the sincerely disposed to distinguish easily on which side the divine power acted. This we shall see by your very objections.

" When *Aaron* threw down his rod in the presence of *Pharaoh*, and it was changed into a serpent, the magicians threw down their rods in like manner, and they were changed into serpents . . . The appearance of both was exactly the same ; the book of *Exodus* takes no notice of any difference . . . It is true," add you, " that the
"fer-

“serpents of *Aaron* devoured the serpents of the
“Magicians; but being once forced to admit the
“power of Magic, all that *Pharaoh* could conclude
“was, that *Aaron* was the greater master in this
“art†.”

Let us suppose all this true for once; all that follows from it is, that, in some particular circumstances, God hath now and then permitted, for a few moments, the miracles of his Envoys not to have that absolutely evident superiority over the delusions of the Magicians; when he designed soon to shew the greatness of his power by new miracles, that should be infinitely more striking. This is exactly the case of the Magicians of *Egypt* when compared with *Moses* and *Aaron*. The Lord soon shewed, in an invincible manner, the power of his Envoys, reduced the Magicians to silence, and to acknowledge their own want of power. The very singularity of this case, which God permitted only once to happen, gives us to understand, that his wisdom will never suffer a concurrence, or so perfect an equality between mere delusions and real miracles, as that a person cannot certainly distinguish on which side the divine power acts. This will be confirmed more and more, as we go on.

“The Magicians,” add you, “having imitated
“the two first Miracles of *Moses*, were stopped
“short at the third After having produced
“frogs, they could not produce insects: why
“not? It was stopping short, when they were
Vol. II. S “going

* Let. III. p. 100.

“going on finely.” Rather say, God stopped them, when they were going on finely, because he thought fit to do so. But why did he suffer them to go on so far? Why did he not let them go on farther? Why did he not stop them at their first setting out? All these questions would be indecent. Though we should not be able to answer them, what would follow from thence? Only this, that we were not present at the divine Council. The history itself nevertheless proves, that God made it evidently known, which were the true Miracles, since the Magicians themselves were forced to own, that the *finger of God was there*: this is enough to solve the whole difficulty.

But God hath moreover condescended to inform us of the reasons of his conduct. He designed to punish an unjust King, and a criminal people, who had violated the laws of nations and of hospitality, by reducing to a cruel thralldom a foreign people, against whom they had no just cause of complaint. To inflict this punishment, and work the deliverance of his people, God so ordered events, that his Justice had an opportunity of redoubling its strokes, and that the chastisement should be adequate to the crime. This is the speech God ordered to be addressed to *Pharaoh*: *I have raised thee, that I might shew my power in thee, and make my name respected throughout all the earth**.

If a conjecture may be allowed of, it appears moreover, that it was the design of God to confound

* Exod. ix. 16.

found the monstrous Idolatry of the *Egyptians*: he declares it in these words: *I will execute my judgments over all the Gods of Egypt**. The greatest part of the plagues, with which God smote the *Egyptians*, seem to have an immediate and marked reference to the objects of their worship. They adored the Sun under the name of *Osiris*; they adored also the *Nile*, *Animals*, and *Plants*. God withdraws the light of the Sun by palpable darkness; he changes the waters of the *Nile* into blood; he covers with boils the *Animals* and their adorers; he fills the whole country with hurtful insects; he destroys the *Plants* by hail and locusts. God adds: *The Egyptians shall learn that I am the Lord†*.

It is therefore false, that *Pharoah* "being once forced to admit the power of Magic, could only conclude that *Moses* and *Aaron* were greater Magicians than his own." At the second plague he was not deceived: *Pray to the Lord*, said he to the two brothers, *to take the frogs from me‡*.

I have elsewhere§ given you an answer to what *Moses* ordered respecting false Prophets; and it is not necessary to repeat it again. Let us go on hearing you.

"*Jesus*, after having declared that he would work no Miracles, foretells false *Christs*, who would: he says that they shall shew such great Signs, and such Miracles, as shall be capable of seducing even the Elect themselves, were it possible.

S 2

Would

* Exod. xii. 12. † Ib. vii. 5. ‡ Ib. viii 8. § See the Third Letter.

“ Would not one be tempted, from his speaking
 “ in this manner, to take Signs or Miracles for
 “ proofs of falsehood ?”

Such a temptation can never take place, when his manner of speaking is attended to without prejudice. In the first place, it is absolutely false, that *Jesus* declared he would work no miracles: he said on the contrary, that he wrought miracles, to the end that they might believe in him. And in fact he not only performed miracles himself, but commanded his Disciples to do the same, and foretold that they should do so. *Heal the sick, said he to his Apostles, when he sent them to preach, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out Devils: freely have you received, freely give*. And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out Devils: they shall speak with new tongues: they shall take up serpents: and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them: they shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover†.* Secondly, he foretells indeed false *Christs*, who should do signs capable of seducing the elect, *if it were possible*: mind that restriction. Where would be the impossibility, if false miracles could exactly resemble true ones, and if God did not always distinguish these latter by certain marks? The rule therefore, which we have established above, is agreeable to the words of *Jesus Christ*.

What you add, is foreign to the purpose.
 “ What ! shall God, who is free to make choice
 “ of

* Matt. x. 8. † Mark xvi. 17.

“ of what proofs he pleases, when he condescends
 “ to speak to mankind, prefer such as suppose
 “ us possessed of a knowledge, which he knows we
 “ have not? He employs the same means to in-
 “ struct them, which he knows the Devil will
 “ employ to deceive them: Would such conduct
 “ as this be that of the Deity? Is it possible,
 “ that God and the Devil should take the same
 “ road? This is what I cannot conceive*.”

Take notice, if you please, that the road is not the same, since the way of God is always marked by characters of superiority, truth, sanctity, which the Devil can never perfectly imitate. Would the spirit of darkness be at the trouble of counterfeiting miracles, if miracles were no proof of their own nature. God hath sometimes permitted it, as he permits false prophets to oppose to his doctrine a doctrine more fit to gain over the minds of men; as he permits hypocrites to copy, to a certain degree, the virtues of the Envoys of God. To ask why he permits these temptations, is to ask why he is pleased to make faith ineritorious in sincere and upright hearts. What recompense would any one merit for preferring truth to falsehood, if the former, by the clearness of its evidence, was not to leave us at liberty to resist it?

You see that the objection you make against miracles, would militate equally against the other proofs of Revelation; it might also be turned against the proofs of natural Religion, which, as

you yourself own, are liable to unanswerable objections*.

It is to no purpose to answer the Dilemma, wherein you repeat the difficulty; giving it a new turn, adds no more weight to it.

You cry out, according to custom, against the injustice of those who accuse you of rejecting miracles. "No," say you, "I neither have rejected them, nor do I reject them. I have alledged some reasons for doubting of them; I have not concealed the reasons for believing them†." Yes, Sir, you have concealed them; and this I have shewn you. While you insisted on those passages of scripture which appeared to you to make any thing against miracles, you carefully stifled such as established them: is this weighing in an equal balance your own opinion, and that of your adversaries?

But after all you confine yourself to doubting of miracles, and here follow the reasons you have for doubting. "I find some facts attested in the *sacred scriptures*; that is enough to make me suspend my judgment with regard to them. If they were in any other book, I would reject them, or strip them of the name of miracles: but because they are recorded in *scripture*, I do not reject them. Neither do I therefore admit them, since my reason refuses to do it, and my determination in this point doth not interest my salvation. No judicious Christian can believe that

* Emil. T. III. p. 30. † Let. III. p. 305.

“ that every thing in the Bible, even to the very
 “ words and typographical errors, are inspired.
 “ Whatever relates to our duty, we ought to con-
 “ sider as inspired ; but why should God give the
 “ rest by inspiration ? Now the doctrine of mira-
 “ cles hath no relation to our duty, as I have just
 “ now proved. So that the opinion a person may
 “ entertain with regard to them, doth not at all
 “ affect the veneration he may have for the sacred
 “ books*.”

You employ the same sophism against Miracles,
 which you elsewhere employed against doctrinal
 points. “ My reason will not suffer me to believe
 “ Miracles : therefore I am well grounded in
 “ doubting of them, though the scripture attests
 “ them.” “ My reason refuses to believe mys-
 “ teries ; therefore I ought to doubt of them,
 “ though the Gospel teaches them ” In order to
 have reasoned more consequently, you ought to
 have said : “ I admit that God hath spoken by the
 “ Gospel : now the Gospel clearly attests Miracles,
 “ expressly teaches Mysteries : therefore my reason
 “ is in the wrong, when it refuses to suffer me to
 “ believe them.” When God speaks, it is our duty
 to believe, and to believe all he says without excep-
 tion. He is incapable of blending together error
 and truth : he cannot ever permit, that his word
 should be corrupted by those he hath charged with
 the publication of it ; for then he would have
 spoken in vain.

See

See, I beg of you, Sir, how inconclusive your arguments are. There are in the doctrine of *Jesus Christ* wonderful Precepts, and incomprehensible Dogmas: the former you believe, you doubt of the latter. There are in his actions natural works, and others that cannot be such: you admit of the one, you doubt of the others. There are in his manners examples of virtue, which humanity may attain to, others which are superior thereto; you ought therefore to believe the former, and doubt of the latter. What after that will remain, whereon to ground the pompous elogium you have given of *Jesus Christ*?

If you say that *Jesus Christ* was endued with more than human sanctity, because he was God, all your doubts became ridiculous; for he consequently then had both knowledge and power more than human; he therefore could teach and do things superior to reason and nature.

“Why should God reveal any thing more, than what related to our duties?” Because he was pleased to do so; and if he hath revealed any thing more, it is an essential part of our duty to believe it.

If we confine ourselves to believe, as given by inspiration, only what hath any relation to our duties, there is at least one half of the Gospel, which we may be dispensed with from believing, and the Gospel then will be reduced to a lower rank, than the moral treatises of Philosophers.

Ac-

According to your principles, *Tully's Offices* ought rather to pass for an inspired book than the Gospel. The Morality, if you please, is not so sublime; but then it is not disfigured like the Gospel by a medley of facts and dogmas, which reason cannot assent to. In balancing the good, which the Morality of the Gospel hath done, with the evil you attribute to the Dogmas and Miracles, it remains undetermined, whether or no the Gospel ought not to have been burnt for the good of mankind. Such is the veneration you instill for the Gospel!

I have already taken notice, that it is a punishable piece of rashness, in all Christian communions, to assert in express terms, that there are errors in the Bible.

To close our long dispute, here in two words is the character of all your writings. With the determined belief of a Deist, you were for retaining a portion of the language of Christianity; but this patch-work, instead of imposing on any, hath equally set all parties against you. The Catholics consider you as the most mortal enemy of Revelation; the Protestants as a false brother, who hath betrayed his own Religion; the Impious, or such as have no Religion, as a dastardly brother, who dares not speak out. Astonished at this general insurrection against you, right or wrong you would make your own Apology; and the bad reception that met with, caused so much vexation, as to precipitate you into new errors.

It is a thousand pities that you did not know your own talents better. Born with a most brilliant

liant imagination, if you had confined yourself to subjects of literature and amusement, you would have met with the most glorious success; but the ambition of dogmatizing unhappily seized you. Nature, in forming you, thought to have formed a Poet; but you would needs be a Divine: the distance between the two is very great; and your fate will be that of all those, who are unfaithful to their vocation.

I am, Sir, &c.

Jan. the 25th,

1765.

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